DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 215 EA 019 730

AUTHOR	Scott, James J.; Smith, Stuart C.
TITLE	From Isolation to Collaboration: Improving the Work Environment of Teaching.
INSTITUTION	North Central Regional Educational Lab., Elmhurst, IL.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jul 87
CONTRACT	400-86-0004
NOTE	92p.; Prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management under contract to NCREL. For other documents in the same series, see EA 019 726-731.
AVAILABLE FROM	Publication Sales, ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, University of Oregon, 1787 Agate St., Eugene, OR 97403 ($8.00); North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 295 Emroy Ave., Elmhurst, IL 60126 ($8.00).
PUB TYPE	Information Analyses - ERIC Information Analysis Products (071) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Organization; Advisory Committees; *Educational Cooperation; Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Instructional Improvement; Instructional Leadership; *Interprofessional Relationship; Participative Decision Making; Principals; School Based Management; School Effectiveness; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Morale; *Teacher Participation; *Teaching Conditions; Teamwork
IDENTIFIERS	ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management

ABSTRACT

This review summarizes the rapidly growing body of findings on the social and organizational environment of teaching and examines one innovation--the collaborative school--that offers promise of an organizational context more conducive to effective teaching. Chapter 1 characterizes the actual conditions under which teachers work, focusing on interactions among teachers and between them and administrators. Chapter 2 examines the formal and informal bonds connecting the classroom, the individual school, the school district, and the state and federal governments. It is concluded that the individual school is the vital unit of school reform and that the workplace conditions of the school play a major role in school effectiveness. Accordingly, chapter 3 sets forth the characteristics of collaborative schools--a set of attitudes and the interactions generated by those attitudes that researchers have found to correlate with improved teaching and learning. Chapter 4 describes formal programs that educators have developed to help administrators introduce norms of collaboration in schools where teachers are accustomed to working in isolation from one another, and practical suggestions are offered about ways in which principals' day-to-day activities can encourage such norms. These suggestions include forming teacher committees to work on specific school problems and providing teachers with time to observe one another. An 82-item, 8-page bibliography is included. (TE)

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From Isolation to Collaboration: Improving the Work Environment of Teaching

Synthesis of Literature

James J. Scott and Stuart C. Smith

July 1987

Prepared for the
North Central Regional Educational Laboratory

by the
ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management
University of Oregon

Foreword

The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management at the University of Oregon and the North Central Regional Laboratory at Elmhurst, Illinois, are pleased to offer this publication, part of a series of syntheses papers and annotated bibliographies on themes related to instructional leadership and school improvement. The Clearinghouse wrote and edited the materials under a subcontract for the North Central Laboratory. Both agencies are now making the publications available to their respective clienteles.

The titles of all the publications in this series are as follows:

Synthesis Papers
Instructional Leadership: A Composite Working Model
Teacher Evaluation as a Strategy for Improving Instruction
From Isolation to Collaboration: Improving the Work Environment of Teaching

Annotated Bibliographies
Models of Instructional Leadership
Teacher Evaluation
The Social and Organizational Context of Teaching

James J. Scott is a research analyst and writer for the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. Stuart C. Smith is the Clearinghouse's director of publications.

Jane H. Arends
Executive Director
North Central Regional
Educational Laboratory

Philip K. Piele
Director
ERIC Clearinghouse on
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Contents

Introduction 1

The Vital Role of the School Site 1
The Focus of This Synthesis 2

1. The Workplace of Teaching 5

Puppets on a String 5
Teaching in the Elementary School 6
Teaching in the Secondary School 9
Elementary and Secondary Teachers: The Ties That Bind 12
Additional Findings on Classroom Teaching 14
Summary 16

2. The External Environment: Bureaucracy, Governments, and Unions 17

The Formal Structure of the School and School District 18
Contrasting Philosophies of School Organization 22
The Federal Government 25
The State Government 26
Teacher Unions and the Schools 32
The Heartland Experience 33
Conclusion 40

3. Collaboration in Schools: A Vehicle for School Improvement? 42

Collaboration: The Rationale 42
The Collaborative School Defined 43
The Collaborative School in Action 44
Teacher Relationships in Collaborative Schools 47
Collaborative Schools: Are They Effective? 50
Conclusion 55

4. Introducing Collaboration in Schools 56

The Principal's Role 56
Comprehensive Strategies 61
The Modest Approach 65
Planning and Resources 67
Conclusion 69

Conclusion 71

The Chapters in Retrospect 71
Areas for Additional Research 73
Elements of the Collaborative School 76
A Fateful Choice 76

Bibliography 78

Introduction

A considerable body of evidence, drawn from studies conducted during the late 1970s and the early 1980s, suggests that the quality of leadership and teaching at the level of the individual school site has a significant impact on what and how well students learn. Researchers identified particular characteristics that distinguish effective from ineffective schools.

In more recent years, several researchers have focused particular attention on the school's social and organizational environment--the workplace conditions that affect the practice of teaching, including teachers' relationships with one another and with administrators--in an attempt to explore further the attributes of successful schools. The purpose of this synthesis paper is to summarize this rapidly growing body of findings on the work environment of teaching.

In addition to describing conditions in the school's organizational and social context that are not conducive to effective teaching, we also examine one innovation--the collaborative school--that offers some promise of improving those conditions.

The Vital Role of the School Site

Richard A. Schmuck (1982) points out that, into the 1960s, most educators intuitively accepted the proposition that the individual school played a significant role in determining how well students learned. Educators undoubtedly disagreed among themselves on the exact attributes of a good school, but they generally agreed that, if such attributes could be identified and cultivated, student performance would improve as a result.

This view of the school as a major force in student learning was undercut in the 1960s and 1970s by studies such as those done by James Coleman (1966) and Christopher Jencks and others (1972). These researchers purported to show that factors such as the student's socioeconomic status and family background played such key roles in determining students' performance that the role played by the school was negligible in comparison. Jencks went so

far as to claim that "equalizing quality of schools would reduce cognitive inequality by one percent or less."

Although many educators questioned the validity of these findings, interest in the individual school as a factor in student learning waned for a time. Eventually, however, new studies sparked renewed hope that improvements at the level of the individual school could lead to improved student performance.

Michael Rutter and associates (1979) tracked a group of children from London's inner city through the first three years after they entered secondary school, comparing performance and behavior at the beginning of the period with that at the end. After allowing for variables such as student socioeconomic status, family background, and individual differences among students, they still found that students "were more likely to show good behavior and good scholastic attainments if they attended some schools than if they attended others." They attributed the differences to "the qualities of the school as a social institution."

Wilbur Brookover and associates (1979), in their study of Michigan elementary schools, arrived at similar conclusions, as have numerous other studies conducted during the past decade.

In short, the research evidence suggests that what happens at the level of the individual school has considerable bearing on student achievement. If this is so, then an understanding of the work environment of teaching is essential to attempts at meaningful school reform.

The Focus of This Synthesis

Teachers do not teach, nor do students learn, in a vacuum. Like any other activities, teaching and learning take place within a context. In the case of teaching, a bewildering array of factors contribute to its context. Even a limited list of these factors includes the physical structure of the classroom, the subject matter being taught, the number and socioeconomic/racial composition of students, the skills and motivation of the teachers themselves, the school's and school district's management style, the relationships among teachers and between them and the principal, and the community's support for the school. Moreover, the state and federal governments, through granting or withholding funds, mandating specific curricula, prescribing particular instructional techniques, and instituting special programs, also play an increasingly important role in shaping that context.

Rather than attempt a comprehensive analysis of all these factors, we have chosen to emphasize certain conditions over which both teachers and administrators have some degree of control. Educators, for example, may not be able to alter the racial

composition of the student body or the condition of the school's physical plant, but teachers can learn to share their instructional expertise with one another and administrators can choose to solicit teachers' opinions when planning new programs or revising old ones. In recent years state legislatures have imposed reforms on schools that in some instances have radically altered teachers' and administrators' work. If educators were to feel that they are increasingly losing control over their jobs, who could fault them? Yet our hope is that the individuals who teach in and administer schools will, after reading these pages, agree that many contextual variables--arguably the most important ones--do remain firmly in their own grasp to shape as they choose.

Susan J. Rosenholtz (forthcoming) claims that "work motivation and commitment. . . has less to do with the personal qualities people bring with them to the workplace than with how tasks are designed and managed within it." A number of other studies, including those by Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little (1985), Bird and Little (1986), and Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller (1984), have arrived at similar conclusions regarding the impact of the workplace conditions of the school on effective teaching and learning. If such conclusions are correct, then understanding the workplace conditions of teaching and the factors that shape them is an essential step toward understanding how teaching and learning can be improved.

Improving the work environment of teaching requires first that we understand the actual conditions under which teachers work. With that in mind, chapter 1 is an attempt to characterize those conditions, focusing on the interactions among teachers and between them and administrators.

The classroom, the individual school, the school district, and the state and federal governments all are connected with one another along formal and informal lines. The interrelationships among these units and their impact on teaching are the subject of chapter 2.

If the individual school is, indeed, the vital unit of school reform and the workplace conditions of the school play a major role in determining the school's effectiveness, then efforts at school reform should focus on improving those workplace conditions. Chapter 3 sets forth characteristics of the collaborative school--a set of attitudes and interactions generated by those attitudes that researchers have found to correlate with improved teaching and learning.

Administrators who favor norms of collaboration are still faced with the problem of introducing those norms in schools where teachers have been accustomed to working in isolation from one another. Accordingly, in chapter 4 we describe formal programs educators have developed to help administrators introduce such

norms, and we offer principals some practical suggestions about ways in which their day-to-day activities can encourage such norms.

Throughout this paper we have sought to keep the discussion on a concrete level by citing numerous examples of actual schools and teachers at work. We are especially indebted to six researchers--Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller (1984), Mary Haywood Metz (1986), Patricia T. Ashton and Rodman B. Webb (1986), and Susan J. Rosenholtz (forthcoming)--whose case studies supplied many of the examples found in these pages.

Although we imposed no formal restrictions on materials selected for this review, the bulk of the works were published during the last four years. Most of the items were identified through a search of the ERIC database. In addition, several particularly useful sources (including a few that are not yet published) were obtained directly from scholars working in this area.

Chapter 1

The Workplace of Teaching

The last three decades have witnessed numerous attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in public schools. Yet, according to William L. Rutherford (1986), "enduring improvements . . . are hard to find. Much money, much time, and much professional effort has left a very paltry legacy."

One reason for this state of affairs may be what Lieberman and Miller (1984) describe as "the enormous gap between those who study schools and those who do the work of schools." Put another way, educational reformers may propose, and school districts may implement, innovative teaching methods or curriculum changes without taking into account the realities of life in the classroom and school where the teacher must teach. Two examples illustrate this point.

Puppets on a String

Joyce A. Kozuch (1979) conducted a case study of a pilot program at a middle school in which evaluative grades were to be replaced by a descriptive grading system (that is, instead of comparing a student's performance with that of other students or with his or her performance potential, the teacher would simply describe what the student has accomplished). Although most of the teachers had greeted the change with at least some enthusiasm when it was first introduced by the school district, by the end of the year almost all the teachers had reverted to some form of evaluative grading--if not on formal report cards, at least on individual student papers and in conferences with students' parents.

Why did the project fail to take hold? To a considerable degree, the failure was grounded in the realities of the workplace conditions under which these particular teachers taught. The teachers found that some form of evaluative grading was needed to enforce discipline and promote student efforts to learn. Without the incentive of evaluative grading, the students could not see the point in working hard or conducting themselves in a well-disciplined fashion.

Sylvia-Lee Tibbetts (1979) describes what happened when the administration of an elementary school introduced a "Programmed Reading Program" without first discussing the matter with the school's reading specialist. Drawn up by outside consultants, the program prescribed virtually every step the reading specialist was to take during the course of her working day--which students she was to work with and when, what instructional techniques she was to use, what record-keeping she was to do, how often and for how long she was to hold conferences with her students' home room

teachers.

By the time the reading specialist had completed all the necessary forms, administered all the necessary tests, and engaged in all the mandatory conferences with home room teachers, she had no time left over for teaching students how to read. Eventually she resigned in disgust.

In retrospect, it seems easy enough to pinpoint what went wrong in each of the two examples. In the first, the school district should not have introduced a nonevaluative grading system without first pausing to consider its possible effects on student work habits and discipline (it must be admitted that, until they actually put the program into practice, even the teachers failed to recognize its potentially negative impact on work habits and discipline). And in the second, the school's administration should not have introduced a new reading program without first consulting the school's reading specialist.

There is no particular reason to think that the administrative personnel described above were any less knowledgeable, dedicated, or sensitive than those in the typical school district. Rather, their actions reflect a perspective on educational change typical of administrators and educational reformers. As Lieberman and Miller explain, "Much of the literature on school change comes from a policy perspective or from a managerial perspective. One gets the view that teachers can be infinitely manipulated like puppets on a string." And that perspective, in turn, reflects "the enormous gap between those who study schools and those who do the work of schools" mentioned earlier.

One way for administrators and educational reformers to bridge that gap--and, in the process, form stronger links with the teachers who must actually implement reforms within the context of the school setting--is to study what teachers actually do and the circumstances under which they do it. What does a teacher teach? How does he or she teach it? What factors in the school environment help or hinder effective classroom teaching? How does a typical day in the life of a school teacher go? These and other, related questions are the subject of the pages that follow. This account draws heavily from Lieberman and Miller's work, which is supplemented at the end by a summary of other research.

Teaching in the Elementary School

Drawing on the available literature, case studies they conducted themselves, and their own classroom experience, Lieberman and Miller describe their view of "what it is like to be a teacher." Part of that view is embodied in their account of the first two days of the school year in one classroom in one elementary school.

It can be argued that, in at least four respects, this classroom is atypical: (1) It is in a magnet school, (2) the classroom is run by a team of two teachers who have been working together for over ten years, (3) each of these teachers has over thirty years teaching experience, and (4) the class consists of approximately sixty students (over twice the number found in a typical classroom with one teacher). Still, what Lieberman and Miller have to say does capture something of the flavor of what goes on in an elementary school classroom.

The First Two Days of School

The first day is short--a half-day used for preliminary testing and an introductory social studies lesson in which the students discuss the presidential election and its relationship to the Constitution. The students are given a handout on the Preamble of the Constitution, together with some study questions. A handwriting lesson completes the day.

On the second day, class begins in earnest. As the first students come filtering in, one boy announces that he has already memorized the Preamble, and gets a hug from Mrs. T. for his efforts. A pile of lunch, books, and papers on the floor prompts Mrs. T. to ask, "What slob lives here?" One girl admits that the pile belongs to her and puts it away. Another girl limps into the classroom wearing the latest fashion in high wedge shoes. Mrs. T. finds the girl a pair of flats in the closet and hands them to her, suggesting that she shouldn't "ever wear those shoes to school again." Finally, it's time for class to start.

> By 9:10 all sixty students are present and ready to begin a class meeting. They sit on couches, floor, and chairs. Both teachers tell the students, "This is not a time to talk with neighbors . . . ." Mrs. B. explains, "If assignments are not finished, take your work home for homework. Every day there will be a writing assignment. It will say 'writing' on the board. Every day there will be a reading assignment. Every week you will be required to do at least three learning center assignments that are set up around the room. There are ten to choose from." As the students begin to get restless, the teachers quickly shift to a social studies lesson on the Constitution, which is followed by a brief question and answer period. Mrs. B. then asks the students what the first ten Amendments to the Constitution are called. No one knows. After ten minutes of wrestling with some very abstract concepts that the students struggle to understand, the room fills with a deadly silence. In a low and very mysterious voice, Mrs. T. says to the class, "Don't anybody tell if they know, but tomorrow come prepared to

tell us what the first ten Amendments are called and why they are so called." The students giggle with delight and anticipation.

The teachers share recess duty, each taking ten minutes of playground supervision and ten minutes off. After recess, classroom activities continue with no letup. The room is a beehive of activity: a diagnostic test in math, work at a learning center, small-group instruction, large-group instruction, and individualized activities "with the teachers weaving back and forth, giving immediate feedback, correcting papers, encouraging, and reprimanding when things get out of hand."

Universal Tensions and Isolation

If the above description gives the impression that the elementary teacher's day is a hectic one, that is probably because it *is* hectic. According to Lieberman and Miller, the typical elementary teacher must teach ten or more subject areas a day to a class of twenty-three to twenty-six students and has six hours or less per day in which to do so.

Lieberman and Miller point out that all elementary teachers are faced with "universal tensions" to which they must respond. "The way they respond . . . often defines what kind of teachers they become." The tensions they describe include those generated by trying to teach a wide range of materials in a limited time, trying to group students according to ability without disrupting the class's sense of unity (in the class studied, students ranged in learning abilities from second through the eleventh grades), trying to teach the three R's while not shortchanging other areas, and trying to teach multiethnic groups and children with special educational needs. In most cases, the teacher cannot look to the administration or other teachers for support in coping with these tensions--he or she must go it alone.

Indeed, more than members of almost any other profession, elementary teachers are isolated from their peers. Teaching teams (such as the one studied by Lieberman and Miller) are still the exception rather than the rule.

More often than not, from the time an elementary teacher walks into the classroom in the morning until he or she leaves in the afternoon, that teacher has practically no contact with anyone other than his or her students. Even the lunchbreak--for people in most occupations a time to socialize with their coworkers--is for most elementary teachers a time to supervise children in the lunchroom or on the playground.

The typical elementary teacher, then, spends perhaps six hours a day, five days a week, teaching a wide range of subjects to a

group of students possessing a wide range of learning abilities. Consequently, the elementary teacher must somehow find the time to teach all those subjects without shortchanging any of them. He or she must stretch the learning capabilities of the gifted children while helping those who are learning-disabled. And finally, he or she must do all of this while working in isolation, with very little help from administrators or from other teachers.

Teaching in the Secondary School

The teacher in the typical secondary school teaches five classes a day in a specific academic discipline to a group of adolescents. The facts themselves are obvious; their implications are considerably more subtle.

Schedules and Status

The secondary teacher faces time constraints different from those with which the elementary teacher must cope. Within minutes after teaching one group of students, the secondary teacher must be prepared to teach another, entirely different one. He or she must find the time in less that an hour to settle down the class, take attendance, introduce the day's subject, develop it, and wrap things up. According to one teacher quoted by Lieberman and Miller, the central concern under such conditions is the following:

> ". . . to keep within a time frame, to keep the subject matter coherent, to keep it going in progressive patterns that make some kind of sense, and to have some time to summarize it for students at the end, to keep questioning them as you are introducing it to them, to keep them on their toes. Also, to give yourself some feedback: are they really hearing this?"

Teacher Patrick Welsh (1986) affirms that the rigid scheduling of classes typical of most high schools hinders teachers: "Sophisticated lab sciences need more than 50 minutes to be worthwhile. I could accomplish more teaching my advanced English students for 90 minutes three times a week than I do now in our daily 50-minute sessions."

Whereas the elementary teacher is a generalist, the secondary teacher is a specialist--usually teaching courses in only one discipline. Consequently, according to Lieberman and Miller, many secondary teachers tend to compare themselves with other teaching specialists--university professors--and find the comparison frustrating. One of the secondary teachers interviewed by Lieberman and Miller describes the situation in the following terms:

"There is academic competitiveness like an Olympic athlete. As a high school teacher, you only make the trials; you represent your country, but no one ever hears about you. In a way, in a heavy academic subject, if you're not way up then you're way down."

Partly due to the time constraints imposed by the need to process students at the rate of one group per hour, and partly due to their desire to emulate college professors, many high school teachers depend primarily "on lecture and discussion" techniques and focus "on content more than on student effect." However, according to Lieberman and Miller, "for many teachers, and their number is growing, this 'didactic' approach to teaching is not working successfully. With no clear alternatives forthcoming, and with no direction from anyone above them, secondary teachers continue to do what is most familiar. And they suffer the consequences in private."

Teacher or Social Worker?

A third problem unique to secondary teachers is that posed by teaching adolescents. The problem comes in two parts. First, the typical secondary teacher encounters his or her students after they have already experienced at least eight years of schooling: by that time, their "academic fate has largely been determined." Second, adolescents, caught somewhere between childhood and adulthood, bring with them to class problems that are not generally encountered in elementary schools. One of the teachers interviewed by Lieberman and Miller describes the situation in the following fashion:

"These kids are awfully smart--in some sense. They know everything. There is very little that they haven't tried themselves or know someone who has--drugs, sex, you name it. It's almost as if you're standing in front of 30-year-olds, except they're kids. They're having babies and they're no more than babies themselves."

In the view of Lieberman and Miller, "Perhaps the central dilemma for secondary teachers is deciding where to place one's emphasis in working with adolescents. The question becomes: am I primarily a teacher who is concerned with the mastery of academic content, or am I primarily a social worker of sorts concerned with the pastoral care of my students?"

More Cohesive Culture

One side effect of the way in which most secondary schools organize the day (six fifty or fifty-five minute class periods,

plus a lunch hour, with teachers allotted five classes plus a preparation period) is the development of a more cohesive teachers' culture than that found in the elementary schools. With their preparation periods and free lunch periods, secondary teachers, much more than elementary teachers, have opportunities to socialize with their peers.

According to Lieberman and Miller, one of the major activities within the faculty culture at many secondary schools is complaining about the administration and/or the students. Consequently, close association with the teachers' culture can be a "double-edged sword. It offers the promise of a sense of belonging as an antidote to loneliness; it also offers potential for negativism and antagonism to any movement toward improvements that a school organization might undertake."

The Secondary School Bureaucracy

One more element with which the secondary teacher must cope should be considered: the bureaucracy, which in most secondary schools is considerably more complex than it is in the typical elementary school. The principal of the typical secondary school is more remote from the classroom than is the principal of the typical elementary school; at the same time, the secondary school teacher must contend with vice principals and department heads.

A distinguishing feature of the secondary school bureaucracy is that teachers must contend with a wide range of individuals--such as guidance counselors, student activities directors, and social workers--who are no higher up the organizational ladder than are the teachers, but whose spheres of influence may impinge upon those of the teachers. Comments by two of the teachers interviewed by Lieberman and Miller help to clarify this point.

> *Teacher 1*: "The student activities director called a meeting of all girls wanting to play powder-puff football for the third hour today. Two hundred girls showed up for the meeting in the auditorium! Half of my class was missing. I had to completely alter my lesson plan for a reason I consider utterly insane."

> *Teacher 2*: "A student was assigned to my honors calculus class who shouldn't even be in advanced math. The counselor will not change his class for reasons I don't quite understand. So, now I have to teach one kind of math to 27 kids and another kind of math to one kid."

In sum, secondary teachers must cope with the constraints resulting from scheduling that gives them one hour at a time to cope with five groups of students per day. They must cope with the frustrations that come from comparing themselves with univer-

sity teachers--who, like secondary teachers, specialize in a particular discipline, but who are accorded more respect than that generally given to secondary teachers. They must cope with the problems inherent in teaching adolescents.

And, in addition to all those problems, they must cope with a complex bureaucracy that often impedes the day-to-day workings of the classroom. Under all these conditions, it is not surprising that the secondary school fosters a climate in which teachers form a culture united primarily in its negative attitudes toward the administration and toward anything that smacks of changes introduced from the outside.

Elementary and Secondary Teachers: The Ties That Bind

The preceding two sections have emphasized the differences between teaching at the elementary and secondary levels. The similarities between the two levels are at least equally important.

At both levels, according to Lieberman and Miller, "the most important interactions that teachers have are with students." Comments by two teachers are illustrative (the first is an elementary teacher; the second is a secondary teacher):

> *Teacher 1*: "I'm with my children all day long. I watch them change by the moment. Some days they'll tell me all of their secrets. Other days, they withdraw into their own little shells. Whatever they do, I'm there to see and hear it, and I take it all to heart."
>
> *Teacher 2*: "If someone told me that my job is just to teach math, I would quit. I couldn't stand to see myself as someone who teaches skills and nothing else. I have to feel that I am doing something more lasting."

In the view of Lieberman and Miller, that "something more lasting" involves "influencing and guiding children toward adulthood."

Avoidance of Mutual Help

Whereas teachers at both the primary and secondary levels engage in and value close interactions with their students, they interact little with one another. We noted earlier that the teacher culture in secondary schools encourages exchanging complaints about both the administration and the students. However, when it comes to exchanging ideas about teaching, or asking one another for advice about handling specific problems, teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels tend to be quite reti-

cent. Again, a teacher interviewed by Lieberman and Miller makes the point:

> "I have never heard another teacher say, 'I have a problem.' You just don't do it. You solve the problem on your own, or you pretend that you don't have one. You never open up to anyone about anything important."

Such reticence on the part of teachers to share their experiences and their problems with one another may seem puzzling to the outsider. However, Lieberman and Miller offer an explanation.

At both the primary and secondary levels, teachers normally teach in isolation, neither observing nor being observed by one another. Consequently, teachers lack a standard by which they can measure their professional competence. Under such circumstances, by not discussing their problems, they "gain the security of not having to face their failures publicly and losing face."

Resistance to Help by Outsiders

Both primary and secondary teachers must cope with problems stemming from the gap between the theoretical knowledge they gain from their formal education and the practical realities they encounter in the classroom. A teacher quoted by Lieberman and Miller sums it up in the following fashion:

> "No teacher ever does what he or she thinks is best. We do the best we can in the circumstances. What you think is a good idea from the outside turns out to be impossible in the classroom."

Lieberman and Miller point out that, although this pragmatic stance may very well be essential to classroom survival, it has its negative side effects. In learning to be practical, teachers resign themselves to accepting the school as it is and place limits on what they expect from themselves and their students. Learning to accept school as it is, they also learn to be suspicious of efforts to change things: "Being open to change and to outside influence is idealistic; being self-sufficient is practical."

The portrait of a school teacher that emerges from Lieberman and Miller's study is one of a dedicated individual continually juggling the demands on his or her time and energy to meet the educational (and sometimes emotional) needs of students. More often than not, the teacher does such juggling in isolation--with little or no assistance from his or her colleagues or from school administrators. And in meeting the demands of their job, teachers tend to be suspicious of innovations introduced from the outside that may conflict with what they perceive to be the realities of

the classroom.

Additional Findings on Classroom Teaching

Thus far, we have relied mostly on Lieberman and Mi'ler in describing what it is like to be a classroom teacher. We have done so in order to draw a picture that comes together as a unified whole.

The salient features of Lieberman and Miller's account of the teaching profession--the importance to teachers of their interactions with students, the isolation of teachers from one another, the tendency of teachers to be apprehensive of change, and the perceptions of teachers that they operate with little or no support from administrators--are supported by the findings of a number of other researchers.

Consistent Findings

When studying teachers in Massachusetts and Florida, Dan C. Lortie (1975) found that they placed a very high value on their relationships with students and assigned very little value to their relationships with other teachers and with administrators. In their study of instructional leadership in eight secondary schools, Bird and Little (1985) found that teachers generally operated in isolation from one another and from administrators and tended to be apprehensive of innovations in instructional techniques and curriculum.

Seymour B. Sarason (1982), drawing on his "experience with very young teachers," concluded that they "are quite unprepared both for the loneliness of the classroom and the lack of relationships in which questions and problems can be asked and discussed without the fear that the teacher is being evaluated."

From his study of thirty-eight schools, John I. Goodlad (1983) concluded, "The classroom cells in which teachers spend much of their time appear . . . symbolic of their relative isolation from one another and from sources of ideas beyond their own background experience." And Sharon Feiman-Nemser and Robert E. Floden (1986), reviewing over fifty years of research on the cultures of teaching, note a consensus that "teachers use little research-based technical knowledge, their rewards come from students rather than from the institution, and interactions with administrators, parents, and other teachers tend to express teachers' desire to be left to themselves."

Societal Changes Pose New Challenges

Most of the conditions described by the researchers we have cited undoubtedly have characterized the teaching profession for generations. During the past two decades, however, a series of societal changes have introduced new factors that may influence the workingplace conditions under which teachers practice their profession.

According to Loyd D. Andrew and associates (1985), the demographic characteristics of the school population have changed dramatically since 1960. In that year, 60.7 percent of Americans twenty-five years of age or older had completed four years of high school; by 1980, that figure had increased to 85.8 percent. In 1960, only 21.7 percent of Americans twenty-five years of age or older who were members of racial minorities had completed four years of high school; by 1980 the figure had increased to 77.1 percent.

In addition to the increases in the percentage of the overall school-age population attending school and the percentage of individuals from minority groups attending schools, the percentage of students from single-parent families and from families whose parents both work increased dramatically during this period. And the mainstreaming of physically and mentally handicapped students has further altered the composition of the classroom from that which faced teachers of an earlier era.

A survey of teachers conducted by Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin and associates (1986) provides some insight into the problems teachers must confront when teaching classes composed of students from a wide range of backgrounds, with a wide range of academic abilities, and with a wide range of personal needs. One high school teacher's biology and physiology classes often include "learning disabled students who have been assigned to these courses for administrative reasons that have nothing to do with their ability to cope with the textbook or course content," McLaughlin and her colleagues say.

One elementary teacher told a member of McLaughlin's team she felt the need to "mother" her students because many of them didn't receive the parental attention and support needed to maintain confidence in themselves and interest in their studies. Another said she spends the first hour of the school day feeding children whose parents didn't get them to school early enough to eat the free breakfast the school provided.

One high school teacher described herself as caught in a "Catch-22" situation: "Teaching students in classroom settings presupposes that they possess certain attitudes about learning; but, if students lack those attitudes, teachers cannot do anything about it, because such students are not disposed to learn atti-

tudes (or anything else) in classroom settings." Many of the teachers surveyed by the team expressed similar frustration at their predicament. They recognized the importance of administering to the nonacademic as well as academic needs of their students, but felt that they lacked the resources to do both.

Classroom Interruptions

Theodore R. Sizer (1984) points out that the classroom routine is frequently interrupted for purposes that are only remotely connected to teaching and learning. He cites the secondary-level social studies class he observed in which the teacher was showing a film depicting the turmoil of the 1960s--the Civil Rights marches, the assassination of John F. Kennedy, the Vietnam War protests. The students were obviously engrossed in the film when the public address system began blaring out a number of announcements. The announcements broke the spell, and, by the time it could be recaptured, class was over.

In Sizer's view, such interruptions "signal the low priority that routine teaching may hold, and they certainly puzzle students who on one occasion observe the school casually canceling some classes to make time for a Mr. and Miss Junior America Assembly and on another severely admonishing individuals not to miss any classes at all."

Summary

In this chapter, we have tried to describe what it is like to be a teacher in an American school. Whereas elementary teachers must cope with the problems involved in teaching one group of diverse individuals a variety of materials within a school day, secondary teachers must deal with the problems involved in teaching the same materials to several different groups. Teachers at both levels tend to work in isolation from one another and from administrators, and they tend to be apprehensive of changes introduced from the outside.

Further, changes in the student population have produced classes much more heterogeneous than those customarily taught by teachers in the past. Adding to teachers' difficulty are the seemingly trivial interruptions in classroom routine that restrict teachers from teaching and students from learning.

Numerous forces operating outside of the immediate environment of the classroom--such as the school climate, relationships between the school and the local community, and state and federal legislation--also influence what goes on within the classroom. It is thus useful to discuss those forces before considering how the conditions under which teachers currently perform their duties can be improved.

Chapter 2

The External Environment: Bureaucracy, Governments, and Unions

Although most elementary and secondary teachers enjoy few professional contacts with their colleagues, this is not to say that they teach in a vacuum. Individual teachers may indeed be physically isolated in their classrooms, yet many outside forces--structural, social, and political--combine to influence how and what they teach. Those external forces are the subject of this chapter.

Foremost among the forces that influence teacher's performance in the classroom is the school organization. Each school is populated by four major types of subgroups--administrators, teachers, support personnel, and students. Each school has its own formal and informal structures that determine, to a considerable extent, the ways in which members of each subgroup interact with one another and with members of the other subgroups. And each school has its own particular set of goals--both explicit and implicit--that individuals within its population, to varying degrees, work toward accomplishing.

The school itself, like the individual classroom, is influenced by forces in its external environment. A school strives to serve its students, of course, but it also must serve the parents of those students and the community at large. In addition to the indirect influence that can come from these two groups, the local school board, through the school district's central office, exerts formal control over the school and its classrooms.

Until recent years, state governments played a minimal role in school administration--certifying teachers, setting attendance standards, and allocating state funds to minimize disparities in resources among the state's school districts. Now, however, it is common for states to mandate statewide educational goals and even to prescribe statewide teaching methods.

Although the federal government prescribes equality of opportunity in education--through such means as banning discrimination on the basis of race--it has not, as yet, actually prescribed curriculum content and teaching practices.

Finally, teacher unions and the collective bargaining process affect, both indirectly and directly, the process of teaching. Relationships between a teacher union and the local school board can influence attitudes of administrators and teachers toward each other. On a district level, collective bargaining agreements--by prescribing hiring and layoff procedures and delineating appropriate duties for teachers--are a factor in determining who teaches what to whom and the tasks teachers may legitimately perform.

In varying degrees, each of these forces influences what the individual teacher teaches and how he or she attempts to teach it. Following a general overview of these forces, we will illustrate their interaction in the example of an actual school district's experience.

The Formal Structure of the School and School District

To function effectively, it is usually necessary for an organization to possess a structure that prescribes the formal relationships among its members. The school is no exception.

The structure of the typical school resembles a pyramid, at the top of which is the school principal, who is responsible for the overall operation of the school. Below the principal on one side of the pyramid are the teachers, and below the teachers are the students. On the other side of they pyramid--also under the control of the principal--are such support personnel as counselors, coaches, and maintenance staff.

The pyramid can, of course, be augmented in any of a variety of ways. At the secondary level, for example, department heads typically occupy positions below that of the principal but above those of other teachers. Alternatively, a school may use teaching teams and assign team leaders to positions above those of the other teachers but below that of the department head or the principal.

The individual school is itself a part of a larger organization, the school district. Within this larger organization, the principal is answerable to a school superintendent, who, in turn, is answerable to a school board. And the school board is answerable to the voters of the school district, who elect the board's members.

Origins in the Factory Model

Dan C. Lortie (1975), Arthur E. Wise (1979), and Richard A. Schmuck (1980) are among those who have studied the origins of the school district's organizational structure in the latter half of

the nineteenth century. With dramatic increases in both the student population and the size of communities, the one-room schoolhouse--administered by the neighborhood at large or by a committee of volunteers and staffed by a single school teacher--was no longer considered adequate to meet the educational needs of society.

As Schmuck points out, "Schools, along with the rest of Victorian society, had entered the industrial revolution, and like the small-craft families of the first half of the nineteenth century, gave way to mass production."

Administration of the school by individuals in the local neighborhood gave way to administration of citywide or areawide networks of schools by a formally elected school board. The day-to-day administration of the school system was placed in the hands of a hired professional--the school district superintendent. One-room schools were replaced by much larger schools staffed by specialists: at the elementary school level, individuals who specialized in teaching a particular grade; and at the secondary level, individuals who specialized in teaching a particular subject.

Just as the day-to-day administration of the school system was placed in the hands of a professional--the superintendent--so also the day-to-day administration of the individual school was placed in the hands of a professional--the principal. In short, the factory, with its emphasis on division of labor and on clear lines of authority, became the organizational model for the modern school.

Bureaucracy in Theory and Practice

The factory model of formal organizational structures is, of course, the bureaucratic model. As Robert E. Herriott and William A. Firestone (1983) explain, the bureaucratic model "has a formal control system, which includes the specification of required behavior through rules." Authority is delegated downward "in such a manner that each level has adequate means to control the behavior of those below it."

Coordination of the activities of members of a bureaucracy is accomplished "largely through written rules that define acceptable behavior and through advanced planning." Information flows from the bottom level of the organization to the top (where decisions are made), and orders are passed down from the top to the bottom (where the orders are carried out).

The philosophy underlying a bureaucracy is a rationalistic one. It assumes that an organization has certain goals that can be identified logically. Once those goals have been identified,

the means to reach them can be determined. Because those individuals at the top of the organizational ladder are the ones who have access to all the pertinent information, they are the ones best equipped to identify the organization's goals and determine the means of reaching them. The function of those individuals at the bottom of the organizational ladder is to work toward the goals set down by their superiors and to do so in the manner their superiors prescribe.

According to Schmuck, educational leaders of the late nineteenth century adopted the bureaucratic model for school systems because they "believed that bureaucratization, in the sense described by Max Weber, represented a rational solution to the complexities of modern problems." In recent years, however, a number of educators and students of organizational structures have come to doubt the efficacy for school systems of the bureaucratic model. Such doubts generally arise from one or both of two beliefs: (1) that the bureaucratic model does not accurately *describe* what actually happens within the organizational structure of a school system and (2) given the reasons for a school system's existence, the bureaucratic model does not describe what *should* happen in schools.

Are schools bureaucracies? Based on a study of 111 elementary through secondary schools, Herriott and Firestone express reservations about the extent to which the bureaucratic model describes what actually goes on within schools. In their view, primary schools can reasonably be considered bureaucratic institutions, whereas secondary schools cannot.

Given their belief that an effective bureaucracy is necessary for implementing changes throughout an organization, Herriott and Firestone see the lack of bureaucratization in secondary schools as a barrier to educational reforms: "Unless major changes are made in the structure and staffing of high schools, it seems unlikely that substantial, enduring reform will be accomplished."

An organization structured according to the bureaucratic model will have tight connections between different levels of the hierarchy. In schools, however, Karl E. Weick (1976) and J.W. Meyer and B. Rowan (1976) suggest that such tight connections are the exception rather than the rule; schools instead should be viewed as "loosely coupled" organizations. What happens in one classroom has little influence on what happens in another. What administrators plan often has little impact on what teachers actually do in the classroom. In short, each individual has considerably more latitude in carrying out his or her tasks than would be the case in a genuine bureaucracy. The principal can issue directives, but it is up to the individual teacher to determine how effectively those directives are carried out.

Should schools be bureaucracies? At the beginning of the

preceding chapter, we discussed Kozuch's study of a pilot program introducing descriptive grading into a middle school and Tibbett's study of an elementary school's attempt to introduce a "Programmed Reading Program." Both efforts at educational reform failed, at least in part because of the use of the bureaucratic model by the schools involved. In each case, changes in teaching methodology were introduced from the top down with little input from the teachers who were to implement the program and with little regard for the circumstances under which those individuals must teach.

A growing body of evidence suggests that reliance on the bureaucratic model can lead to consequences more pernicious than the failure of particular attempts at introducing educational reforms. R.L. McNeely (1983) speculates that teacher burnout may be linked to school board policies that deny teachers the opportunity to make decisions, to employ their professional expertise, and to feel that they are making a meaningful contribution to the school.

Samuel B. Bacharach and associates (1983), in their survey of teachers in New York State, found a correlation between administrative failure to include teachers in the decision-making process and teacher militancy. And Harold Cox and James R. Wood (1980), in their study of school teachers from a midwestern city, found correlations between teacher alienation on the one hand and rigidity of the organizational hierarchy, lack of participation in decision-making, job codification, and rigid enforcement of rules on the other.

Bureaucratic structures tend to have certain negative effects on employee relationships in all organizations, say Robert J. Alphonso and Lee Goldsberry (1982). But in schools, they note, these effects "are compounded by the physical isolation of teachers at work." The result is a "dearth of professional interaction among teachers," which "not only deprives them of a valuable tool for self-improvement but also *deprives the school organization of a rich pool of human talent for organizational improvement efforts*" (their emphasis).

Jerry L. Patterson, Stewart C. Purkey, and Jackson V. Parker (1986) argue that the rational bureaucracy as a model for schools offers an ideal that is both unattainable and undesirable: "the rational model is how many people feel school systems *should* run and how the best *do* run" (their emphasis). In fact, say these writers, "the former is not possible and the latter is not true." As an alternative, they propose what they call the "nonrational" model. A comparison between these two different models will help us to look deeper into many of the issues surrounding school organizational structures.

Contrasting Philosophies of School Organization

As Patterson and his colleagues describe the nonrational model, it is founded on four major beliefs:

1. that goals are defined and decisions are made through a process of compromise among competing interest groups, rather than through the process of objectively determining, through rational means, what is the best course of action to take
2. that power can and should be accessible to everyone within the organization, rather than concentrated in those at the top of the organization ladder
3. that those closest to the action (the principal of a school and the teacher in the individual classroom) are those best equipped to determine what needs to be done
4. that the school district's primary function is to offer support to the individual schools, rather than to impose specific courses of action upon those schools

Patterson and associates developed and labeled the nonrational model so recently that little information is available on its observed strengths and weaknesses. Because the model encourages each level in the organization to allow the level immediately below it considerable latitude in carrying out its functions, the model would seem to possess some of the strengths and weaknesses characteristic of the "loosely coupled" organization.

Schmuck suggests that the most noteworthy characteristic of a loosely coupled system--the relatively large amount of freedom from outside control that each element within the system enjoys--can be a strength under some circumstances and a weakness under others. Loose coupling can give a school the freedom it needs to embark on an innovative program and a teacher the freedom to experiment with innovative teaching techniques. At the same time, if a school is badly in need of reform, or a teacher is using teaching techniques poorly suited to the needs of his or her students, loose coupling tends to insulate the school or teacher from outside pressure to improve. Put another way, loose coupling tends to reinforce those strengths or weaknesses that a school or an individual teacher already possesses.

Loose coupling also provides the flexibility a school or teacher must have to serve the needs of a wide range of students. But loose coupling makes standardization difficult in those circumstances where standardization would be beneficial: for example, when a student is transferring from one class or school to another.

Rational vs. Nonrational Models

The nonrational model differs from the bureaucratic or rational model in its views of organizational goals, power-sharing, decision-making, relationships between the organization and the external environment, and the teaching process.

Organizational Goals. According to the bureaucratic model, goals are determined through a rational assessment of the organization's needs and are pursued uniformly by all members of the organization. According to the nonrational model, goals are determined through the process of making compromises among the conflicting claims of various elements within the organization. Instead of all elements working together to accomplish an agreed-upon set of goals, different elements may pursue different goals separately.

Power-sharing. In the bureaucratic view, power is finite and is concentrated at the top of the organizational pyramid. In the nonrational view, power is limitless. Any individual or group within the organization can attain power in proportion to the amount of information, resources, and support that individual or group can acquire.

Decision-making. According to the bureaucratic model, all the data pertinent to a particular issue are gathered and then administrators make decisions on the basis of what options will most help the organization to achieve its goals. According to the nonrational model, decision-making, like goal-setting, is the product of compromise among a myriad of conflicting interests. Decisions tend to be made on the practical basis of what is feasible, rather than on the ideal basis of what is, rationally speaking, most desirable.

External environment. The bureaucratic model treats an organization as, ideally, a closed system immune to forces from the outside: if central school district staff, school principals, and teachers do their jobs effectively, outside forces ought not and will not interfere. The nonrational model readily acknowledges that outside forces can and should play a role in determining what happens within the schools. Parents and others can and will have a voice in what the schools do.

The teaching process. According to the bureaucratic view, some single teaching technology--discoverable through rational means--will produce the best possible educational outcomes for all students. Consequently, in a school district run on the bureaucratic model, efforts at educational improvement focus on developing that technology and introducing it in classrooms throughout the district.

In contrast, the nonrational model assumes there is no one best

way to teach all subjects to all students. Consequently, a school district run on the nonrational model focuses on providing the schools with the resources they need so that their teachers will be able to explore those teaching avenues that offer the most promise for their own particular students.

The Cooperative Bureaucracy

The preceding discussion of the rational and nonrational models reflects the debate between those who favor what Thomas J. Sergiovanni (1987) calls a "pure bureaucracy" and those who favor what he calls a "professional bureaucracy." Proponents of a pure bureaucracy favor "standard operating procedures in teaching" and "standardized outcomes for students." Proponents of a professional bureaucracy concede the necessity of conducting management support systems bureaucratically, but argue that teaching and learning should be "under the control of highly trained professionals who exercise autonomy as they diagnose educational problems and prescribe educational treatments to their students."

In Sergiovanni's view, both sides are off the mark. We have already reviewed some of the defects of a pure bureaucracy. Although many educators are attracted to the idea of a professional bureaucracy, it, too, has disadvantages for schools, a chief one being that it promotes isolation among teachers.

> Within professional bureaucracies, professionals work alone. Further, professional bureaucracies are characterized by too much decentralization; thus, too much autonomy is given to individual workers. Within professional bureaucracies, there is little need for professionals to cooperate, to work together. Since they share a common socialization and possess standardized skills, it is assumed that they will diagnose problems similarly and apply the same standard treatments to these problems. Therefore, what would be the point of having them work together?

More appropriate for schools is the "cooperative bureaucracy." One key element of the cooperative bureaucracy is the idea that tight and loose structuring are not mutually exclusive.

> Typically, successful schools resemble the pure bureaucracy by making clear to members certain nonnegotiable imperatives to which all are expected to adhere. At the same time, they resemble the professional bureaucracy by allowing workers wide discretion as to how they will function day by day as imperatives are pursued.

The other key element of a cooperative bureaucracy is emphasis on "the necessity for people to work together to be successful," he states. In a cooperative bureaucracy, teachers do not function

as bureaucrats following standardized procedures. Neither do they function as autonomous professionals, each applying his or her expertise independently of his or her fellow teachers. Rather, their work is arranged in such a fashion that they are encouraged "to work together and share together as they plan, diagnose, teach and evaluate."

Sergiovanni's discussion of the cooperative bureaucracy suggests that clearly defined school goals, considerable discretion for the individual teacher exploring ways to meet those goals, and teachers working together to solve their problems are not mutually exclusive objectives. In chapters 3 and 4 we will discuss in greater detail ways in which teachers can work together and share their expertise for the benefit of all concerned.

Thus far we have discussed ways in which the organizational structures of the school and the school district influence the conditions under which teachers exercise their craft. Relationships between the individual district and the state and federal government also affect those conditions. It is to those relationships that we now turn.

The Federal Government

The federal government began playing a significant role in public education at the primary and secondary levels when the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) that the formal segregation of public schools on the basis of race was unconstitutional. Subsequent rulings by the federal courts have extended the doctrine enunciated in *Brown* to require, in some instances, forced busing to end *de facto* segregation on a districtwide basis (that is, segregation resulting from racially homogenous neighborhoods within a school district, rather than from state laws or formal school district policies.)

In 1975, Congress expanded the concept of equal educational opportunity for all by enacting Public Law 94-142, which, as Sarason says, was intended to ensure that "for every handicapped child there will be a tailor-made program reflecting the effort to maximize that child's participation in the classroom's and school's 'normal' activities."

Federal court decisions and laws such as these have inevitably had their effects on policies at the district level and practices at the level of the individual school. Many school districts have had to wrestle with the practical problems of implementing court-mandated integration or mainstreaming handicapped students, often in the face of vociferous opposition from elements within the community. And many teachers find themselves faced with meeting the needs of students with a much wider range of backgrounds and academic skills than those whom they taught in the past.

At the same time that the federal government exercises direct control over education in the public schools by mandating equality of educational opportunity, it exercises indirect influence over the schools in the form of federal funds available for various educational projects. For example, the availability of federal funds to buy computers may lead a school district to take a greater interest in computer-related education than it would if such funds were not available.

Finally, the federal government can act as what Larry Cuban (1986) calls a "national cheerleader for change." Federally funded reports such as the National Commission on Excellence in Education's *A Nation at Risk* (1983) help to shape the perceptions of the general public, state officials, and local school boards regarding what the schools should be accomplishing and how well they are accomplishing it.

In our discussion of three magnet schools in the Heartland School District (portrayed by Mary Haywood Metz), we will show in greater detail some of the ways in which actions at the level of the federal government affect schools at the local level. For now, however, we will turn to the state government and its role in education.

The State Government

Until recently, state governments generally limited their role in public education to ensuring educational equity. Through such means as certifying teachers and allocating state funds to minimize disparities in resources among school districts, the state endeavored to ensure that all its citizens had roughly the same access to a public education. The content of that education was, for the most part, left up to the local school districts. Wise (1979) points out that, when leaders at the state level did enunciate educational goals, those goals were couched in such broad terms as to leave the local school districts with a great deal of latitude in interpreting them.

In recent years, however, a substantial portion of the general public has come to believe that local school boards cannot or will not do an adequate job of educating the community's children. In response to pressure from concerned citizens and in reaction to alarms set off by such reports as *A Nation at Risk*, a number of states have chosen to take a more active role in setting educational policies and seeing that those policies are carried out. Two examples will show how such activism influences education at the local level.

Unintended Side Effects

Patrick Welsh (1986) draws on his personal experiences as a teacher at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia, to describe what happened when the state of Virginia decided to take a more active role in setting and enforcing educational policy. The state's primary goal--toughening up the educational curriculum--was laudable enough. But the state's efforts to pursue that goal, according to Welsh, produced unexpected side effects.

Among the new state standards was a requirement that all high school students take two years of math and of a laboratory science, instead of the one year previously required. Although these standards had the (presumably) desirable effect of ensuring that all students were exposed to more math and science than some of them would have been exposed to otherwise, it had the unintended effect of forcing T.C. Williams to eliminate its elective science courses. In Welsh's view, increasing the amount of science all students are required to take while reducing the number of options available to those students interested in science as a career constituted a tradeoff of questionable value.

Even more distressing were the state's "seemingly rigid plan for executing the standards, and . . . potentially nightmarish bookkeeping requirements." Those requirements identified "literally hundreds" of things students were expected to do at various points in their education. For example, eleventh graders, regardless of their reading and comprehension skills, were expected to "explore the relationship between style and meaning in literature" in their English classes. Similarly rigid standards were laid out all the way down to the kindergarten level.

Robbing Teachers' Instructional Time

Susan J. Rosenholtz (1987) analyzed a Minimum Competency Testing program implemented in Tennessee. Two task forces (one for the math program, one for the reading program), each consisting of five individuals from the state's Department of Education, five education professors, and five hand-picked teachers, developed the programs. The reading task force identified 708 reading skills and constructed 241 reading tests. The math task force identified 661 math skills and developed 435 math tests.

Implementation of the program was mandatory, though in the first year each school could choose whether to implement the reading program or the math program. The individual school districts were charged with ensuring teacher compliance, and the state scrutinized reports turned in by the districts.

Most of the teachers interviewed by Rosenholtz expressed disapproval of the MCT program. Not surprisingly, the facets of the program to which they most vociferously objected included the

time needed to acquire materials for teaching state-mandated skills (in many instances, textbooks already available did not include such materials), the additional paperwork, and the time needed to do state-mandated testing. Many teachers noted that the additional time they were required to spend in such activities meant they had less time available for teaching. Thus Rosenholtz concludes: "Rather than providing students greater opportunity to master basic skills and testing them to ensure mastery, MCT instead robbed them of access to their most critical learning resource--teacher's instructional time."

Depriving students of teachers' instructional time was not the only negative effect of MCT noted by Rosenholtz. She found that the program pressured teachers into teaching separate reading skills (in the order in which they would appear on tests), rather than teaching reading as an integrated whole. Similarly, the program pressured teachers into teaching all students the same thing at the same time--denying teachers the flexibility to cope with the needs of students with a wide variety of skill levels. And, by denying teachers the opportunity to employ their professional skills in meeting the needs of their students, the program lowered teacher morale.

Need for Local Autonomy

That the state government will play some role in public education is hardly open to question. The exact nature of the role the state government should play, however, is far less clear.

John I. Goodlad (1983) considers it inevitable that the state, which provides most of the money for education, will play a pivotal role in setting educational goals. At the same time, those goals should be broad, allowing the individual districts considerable freedom in determining how to meet them. The state would "have virtually no involvement in the specifics of instruction," but its role would "include ensuring the production and dissemination of knowledge required for appraising assets and liabilities at all levels of the system."

Wise points out that problems of inequity in allocation of resources, opportunities, and programs are unlikely to be solved at the local level, because those who benefit from such inequities are the ones likely to exercise control over local policies. At the same time, educational problems *per se* (curriculum and instruction) are best solved by those in the local community, who can best assess its educational needs. Consequently, Wise would like to see the state and federal governments use their authority to mandate equity in the allocation of resources, opportunities, and programs yet still allow school districts to determine matters of curriculum and teaching methods.

The push toward educational reform on a national level places the states in a delicate position. On the one hand, if a state government fails to take the lead in introducing innovation into the schools, it may be faulted for allowing individual schools and school districts to languish in a perceived state of mediocrity. On the other hand, if the state sets and enforces strict educational policies, it may find that it has robbed the individual districts of the flexibility they need to deal with the particular needs of their students.

Delegated Control: A Possible Solution?

Robert F. Elmore (1983) suggests that this either-or problem (either the state takes the lead in educational innovation and robs schools of their flexibility, or the state permits schools to languish in seeming mediocrity) stems from misconceptions about the nature of complex administrative systems. In Elmore's view, "*When it becomes necessary to rely mainly on hierarchical control, regulation, and compliance to achieve results, the game is essentially lost*" (his emphasis).

According to Elmore, the primary purpose of administrators in a complex organization such as a state system of education should not be "to ferret out and penalize incompetence." Rather, it should be "to improve the overall performance of the system." To accomplish this purpose, the emphasis should be on getting information about effective and ineffective practices into the hands of teachers and principals, rather than on monitoring strict compliance with specific regulations.

In Elmore's view, "If a policy does not make sense at the delivery level, it is not going to make sense at the top of the system." To ensure that policies make sense at the delivery level, Elmore suggests that state education leaders engage in what he calls "backward mapping." To show how backward mapping works, he offers the following example:

- *What is the problem*? Poor performance by children on standardized measures of reading and math skills.

- *Where do we attack the problem*? In the classroom.

- *What has to happen in the classroom to improve reading and math performance*? Teachers: more instructional time on reading and math, better instructional skills, materials closely related to the teacher's strategy and style of instruction, access to other teachers confronted with the same problem. Students: motivation to master the content, reward for learning.

- *What can the local school system do to increase the likelihood that these things will happen in the classroom*? Remove conflicting instructional requirements, provide access to training for teachers, provide resources (released time, extra compensation, production of materials, etc.) for teachers to develop reading and math instruction, identify students with the greatest need, communicate program to parents.

- *What can the state education department do to increase the likelihood that these things will happen in local districts*? Remove conflicting policy requirements (with legislative concurrence), transfer information on unusually successful practices from one setting to another, assure fiscal responsibility of local districts receiving state support for basic skills program.

- *What can the legislature do to increase the likelihood that the state education department and local school districts will successfully address the basic skills problem*? Remove conflicting policy requirements, authorize and appropriate funds, establish rules of fiscal responsibility, establish basic elements of program design: classroom as the basic delivery unit, local district support for teacher-produced curriculum, state support for transfer of unusually successful practices.

According to Elmore, the "process of reasoning" followed above "is driven not by the policymaker's limited understanding of the problem, but by the mobilization of delivery-level expertise." Policy-makers using this reasoning process do not attempt to solve delivery-level problems (such as improving reading and math skills) themselves. Rather, they take steps to ensure that people at the delivery level (in this case teachers) are furnished the resources needed to solve such problems on their own. In this sense, control is delegated to delivery-level personnel.

Instead of comparing relationships in the ideal school system to those in a traditional bureaucracy, Elmore compares them to those of a contractor and a subcontractor:

> Legislators and agency heads cannot teach reading. Teachers cannot increase the amount of money the government spends on reading instruction. But policymakers can trade--bargain--resources for increased attention to reading instruction and for information on the effects of that attention. And teachers can trade delivery-level performance for increased resources and the ability to make discretionary choices. This bargain is a two-way affair, inherently different from

> hierarchical control. A contract is not an instrument of coercion. Rather, it is an efficient instrument of harnessing delegated control to policy objectives.

It remains to be seen how many state systems of education will adopt the model proposed by Elmore and how effective that model will turn out to be in actual practice. For the present, it seems to offer substantial promise as a means of enabling the state to play a strong supporting role in educational improvement without imposing a rigid uniformity on practices in the individual classroom.

Samuel B. Bacharach and his colleagues (1986), taking an approach similar to that of Elmore, note that debates over school reform "invariably turn on the issues of coordination and discretion." On the one hand, reformers at the administrative level tend to stress the need to coordinate school activities and, hence, the need to exercise control over teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, tend to stress their need to exercise discretion when dealing with the situations they encounter in the classroom and, hence, the need for autonomy. In most cases, neither administrators nor teachers entertain the possibility that "school systems might be able to give their individual teachers *more* discretion while achieving *closer* coordination." Yet, the writers claim that is exactly what happens in those schools that are considered to be more effective than others.

It appears that the way to accomplish the seemingly contradictory goals of permitting teachers greater discretion while achieving greater coordination of school activities is to emphasize cooperation rather than control. Thus, Bacharach and his colleagues note that principals of effective schools promote "norms of collegiality" and rely more on informal channels of communication than on formal means of control to achieve their objectives. Principals monitor progress toward goals as a way to identify obstacles and overcome them, rather than as a way of making "summary judgments regarding the 'competence' of particular staff members."

Like Elmore, Bacharach and his coauthors argue that the primary function of administrators at the state level should be to help schools and districts find ways to develop their own strategies to promote school improvement:

> The real test of the current education reform movement will be whether outsiders can find strategies that do not depend upon the imposition of topdown controls, but rather, help school districts tap the wealth of expertise, information, and eagerness to improve that presently lie trapped and underutilized in the isolated classrooms of our nation's schools.

It should be noted that many of the characteristics of a "delegated control" model for a state school system--emphasis on sharing, support for delivery-level personnel, and capitalizing on the expertise of those personnel--are also characteristic of the collaborative school, described in the next chapter as a vehicle for improvement at the school building level.

Teacher Unions and the Schools

Teacher unions are a pervasive influence in American's schools. In the years since 1959, when Wisconsin adopted a law resembling the National Labor Relations Act, teacher unions have become so successful that, according to Charles T. Kerchner and Douglas E. Mitchell (1986), almost 90 percent of the teachers in districts with over one thousand students have become represented by unions.

Teacher unions have produced undeniable benefits for their members and, it can be argued, for the schools as a whole. It can reasonably be argued that collective bargaining agreements protecting teachers from the vagaries of their principals or school boards give teachers the security they need to devote their time to what is most important--teaching their students. However, when collective bargaining agreements are not reached within a reasonable amount of time after bargaining begins, and unions and administrators become locked in adversarial positions, the results are not conducive to good teaching and learning. Kerchner and Mitchell note two major negative effects of prolonged disagreements between teacher unions and school districts.

First, "Ongoing conflict involves concerted activities that may be as disruptive as strikes. Sick-outs, refusals to assign and grade homework, 'teachless Wednesdays,' and other modest forms of civil disobedience can last for months."

Second, in districts involved in continued disagreements between administrators and teachers, lines of communication needed for such important activities as planning, curriculum development, and departmental restructuring tend to break down.

Unionization of teachers can have other, more subtle, effects. Collective bargaining agreements often have elaborate stipulations regarding tenure, job seniority, and transfers of teachers. On the one hand, these stipulations do offer teachers a certain amount of job security. But, by legitimizing the *status quo*, they also can make it very difficult for a school system to engage in meaningful structural reforms.

Rand Corporation researchers Arthur E. Wise and Linda Darling-Hammond (1985) point out that the net effect of typical union demands on management has been to intensify the

bureaucratization of schools. For example, unions' insistence that all employees receive the same number and kind of evaluations feeds into the tendency of bureaucracies to treat all employees alike. Further, the traditional union role of protecting its members' rights has led to the enshrinement in most school districts of a long list of procedural requirements that constrain administrators.

In sum, the organizational structure of school districts, the policies of state governments, and the power of teacher unions all influence what goes on at the classroom level. We turn next to Mary Haywood Metz's (1986) analysis of three magnet schools in Heartland School District to show how all of these forces work to shape classroom teaching and learning.

The Heartland Experience

From January 1979 through June 1980 Metz conducted a case study of three magnet middle schools and the district where they were located. By showing how "these particular schools developed the kind of life they did," Metz hoped to "identify important influences in the shaping of magnet schools and innovative schools more broadly." In so doing, she also showed that the way a school fulfills its mission is determined in part by the ways in which its principal and faculty respond to the "important influences" that she identifies.

"Heartland" (the pseudonymous name Metz gives to the city served by the school district she studied) is located in the Midwest and has a population of over a half-million. Although the city's overall population was only 23 percent black at the time of the study, blacks accounted for almost half of the students in the public school system (Metz attributes this to a higher birthrate among blacks in the city and to a flourishing parochial school network, which drew white students away from the public schools).

Heartland's magnet schools program originated as a tool intended to help the school district comply with a 1976 federal court order mandating an end to desegregation in the city's schools. By establishing magnet schools designed to lure students of all races, shutting down some overcrowded schools in predominantly black neighborhoods, and allowing students to attend the school of their choice whenever their presence contributed toward racial balance, the school district hoped to comply with the court order without resorting to mandatory busing.

Adams Avenue Middle School

Adams Avenue originated in 1972 as a seventh-grade annex to Williams Junior High School, "an overcrowded black school in the

poorest part of the near East Side" of Heartland. In 1976, the central district office decided that Adams Avenue would be an appropriate site for a magnet middle school serving the sixth through eighth grades and using Individually Guided Education (IGE) as the core of its program. Mrs. Michaels, who had been a counselor at Williams and had run Adams Avenue while it had functioned as an annex to the older school, was appointed principal.

The transition from a junior high school annex serving only seventh graders and employing a standard curriculum to a middle school using IGE was not entirely smooth. Few of the teachers were familiar with IGE and little time was available for inservice training before the program was introduced. In addition, many teachers expressed resentment at having IGE imposed on them from above.

In the second year of the program, the district received federal funds for magnet schools and used some of the money to help implement IGE at Adams. "Teachers were given released time to study IGE, to plan a coherent IGE curriculum in each subject, and to review and order appropriate materials," Metz notes. A combination of experience with the new approach and support from the central office helped teachers to become comfortable with IGE. By the end of the third year in the program, says Metz, the "teachers and principal had a sense of having hit their stride, of having a school which, despite some continuing adjustments, was developing a coherent and solid program."

Jesse Owens Open Education School

Among the three schools studied by Metz, Jesse Owens was unique in that it had "the only program which had been founded on the initiative of school level administrators and teachers." Moreover, Jesse Owens developed its program--in the face of considerable skepticism on the part of the district's central office--before the district had planned to implement either desegregation or magnet schools.

Within two years of Jesse Owens' founding in 1970 as a seventh-grade annex to Rodgers Junior High School, the staff and principal had organized Jesse Owens into groups of teachers working with groups of students as "families." Teachers attending workshops at a state university were exposed to the concept of open education, became enthusiastic about the idea, and succeeded in communicating their enthusiasm to other teachers at Jesse Owens. When, in 1972, a new high school absorbed the ninth-grade class from Rodgers Junior High School and Rodgers took back its seventh graders, the staff at Owens suggested that it be designated a special school offering open education to sixth through eighth graders on a citywide basis.

Metz explains that two events took place in 1976 that were to influence profoundly subsequent developments at Jesse Owens. First, the district implemented its magnet school program. Second, the district closed Rodgers Junior High School and moved Jesse Owens' program into the Rodgers building.

Before implementation of a citywide magnet program, Jesse Owens had been the only "special" middle school in the district. As such, it fought effectively for special concessions from the district's central office: its own admissions procedures, relatively low teacher-student ratios, and comparatively more free time for teachers to engage in planning activities together. With the new program, Jesse Owens became only one of three special middle schools that were competing with one another for the district's resources.

At the same time, says Metz, the district decided that, instead of allowing Jesse Owens to continue using its own admission procedures (in which students explained why they wanted to enroll in an open school), Jesse Owens would be required to use the same standard forms used in most of the magnet schools. These forms effectively precluded screening on any basis other than ensuring that racial balance was maintained. Moreover, personnel at Jesse Owens pointed out that the open education approach requires that students have minimum reading skills. When the school requested permission to deny entrance to students who could not read at the fourth-grade level, that permission was denied.

The school district moved the Jesse Owens program into the Rodgers building in part to provide enough space to double the program's enrollment. Both the move itself, however, and the rapid increase in the program's population that accompanied the move, produced unexpected consequences, according to Metz.

Prior to the move, Jesse Owens had relied to a considerable extent on students already enrolled in the program to help introduce the program to new students. So long as turnover remained relatively constant, roughly two-thirds of the student body (the seventh and eighth graders) were veterans of the program who could help the newcomers become adjusted. However, when the student population suddenly doubled, experienced students were substantially outnumbered by new ones, making it much more difficult for the experienced students to assist in acclimating the inexperienced ones.

At the same time that the student population doubled in size, its composition changed dramatically. As Metz explains, many parents of students who had formerly attended Rodgers Junior High opted to have their children attend Jesse Owens--not because those parents believed in open schooling, but because they wanted their children to continue their education in their local neighborhood.

Consequently, teachers at Jesse Owens found themselves teaching many students who had neither the skills nor the interest in open education needed to make the program work.

The move to Rodgers substantially changed the composition of the faculty as well. Doubling the program's student population meant doubling the size of its faculty. And, because of the union contract, teachers formerly employed in Rodgers Junior High could teach in the Jesse Owens program if they promised to take in-service training in open education. Many teachers who were unenthusiastic about open education still elected to take this option rather than take their chances on placement elsewhere in the school system.

All these changes, says Metz, radically altered the Jesse Owens open education program. With a larger student body, a higher proportion of students who lacked basic skills, and a significant number of faculty members lacking faith in the open education concept, Jesse Owens inevitably moved toward a more traditional view of schooling. When last interviewed, the principal at Owens, while conceding that some movement in the direction of traditional schooling had been necessary and even desirable, expressed concern that any further changes along those lines would rob the program of characteristics that had given it its appeal and reason for existence in the first place.

Horace Mann School for the Talented and Gifted

Horace Mann was the only middle school in the Heartland system that was permitted to screen its entering students on the basis of their abilities. Only those students were admitted whose elementary school teachers identified them as talented and gifted.

The student body at Horace Mann was more gifted academically than any other student body in Heartland's middle schools. Nevertheless, the student body was diverse; a quarter of the entering students tested below the national median in reading, and only one-half tested in the top quarter compared to national norms. Still, to quote one teacher interviewed by Metz, the student body was "95 percent nice kids." Yet, in contrast to the teacher cultures at Adams Avenue and Jesse Owens, the one at Horace Mann was characterized by "an insistence that the conditions in which teachers taught were overwhelmingly difficult and chronic anger with the administration." To explain why the faculty felt this way, Metz focuses on those conditions under which the Horace Mann faculty's culture was shaped.

What became the Horace Mann School for the Gifted and Talented was originally housed at Atlantic Avenue Junior High. Before becoming the site of a magnet program, Atlantic Avenue had served a predominantly black, working-class neighborhood and,

according to Metz, was a school "where the kind of opposition which can develop between poorly achieving working-class and minority students and their teachers was in full flower." The faculty culture at Atlantic Avenue reacted to this set of circumstances by adopting the attitude that no one could teach effectively under such conditions, and, for this reason, teachers could not be blamed for their failure.

The defensive attitudes of teachers at Atlantic Avenue were reinforced by the way in which the talented and gifted program was introduced into the school. During the program's first year, the seventh-grade class consisted of students drawn from the talented and gifted program at Peach Street Elementary School, whereas the eighth-grade class continued to consist of students from the Atlantic Avenue neighborhood. A select group of teachers were chosen to work with the seventh graders; the rest of the faculty--assigned to students from the local neighborhood--were forbidden to have anything to do with the gifted children. As Metz explains, "They might help a colleague set up a lab or an art room, but they were expected to leave the room when the students entered." Although all the teachers ended up in the gifted program after it had been extended to include the eighth grade, the initial exclusion of many teachers from the program created bitter feelings among those who had been left out.

To further complicate matters, many of the parents of children in the talented and gifted program were well-educated members of the middle-class who openly expressed doubts about the abilities of teachers drawn from an innercity school. Such parents' criticisms did little to enhance the morale of Atlantic Avenue's teachers.

In its second year, Metz says, the program was moved into the same building with Horace Mann High School. With the move, additional problems materialized. District policy precluded having more than one principal in any school building. Consequently, the staff of what was now Horace Man Middle School for the Gifted and Talented found themselves answering to a vice-principal as chief administrator who was, in turn, subordinate to the high school's principal. The high school principal was formally entitled to hierarchical control over the middle school, and he sometimes seemed to the teachers to override decisions made by the vice-principal in charge of the middle school. From the point of view of Horace Mann's faculty, they had no one in a position of authority to whom they could turn.

In summary, the experiences of Horace Mann's faculty during the years when they had taught at Atlantic Avenue played a crucial role in their attitudes toward their work after they had been transferred to Mann. At Atlantic Avenue, they had responded to the problems involved in teaching low-achieving students by adopting the attitude that their failures reflected the conditions

under which they taught rather than any lack of ability on their own part. When faced with a new set of problems at Horace Mann, they responded by adopting a similar set of attitudes: no one could effectively achieve the district's goals with this diverse set of children and this particular unsympathetic school administration.

Given these attitudes, it is not surprising that most of the teachers observed by Metz seemed to derive little pleasure from their work and "seemed poised to leave the building at the first legal moment at the end of each day."

Conclusions from the Heartland Experience

This revealing case study by Mary Haywood Metz focuses our attention on the interactions among a number of forces--actions by the federal government, school district policies, pressures from parent groups, teacher unions, and relations between a school's administration and its faculty, to name a few--and shows how those interactions shape the way teaching is approached in each individual school.

Federal court order. The impetus for organizing magnet schools at Adams Avenue and at Horace Mann and for conferring magnet status on Jesse Owens was a federal court order mandating desegregation of the district's schools. That same court order had other, more subtle, effects on the development of these schools. For example, the program for the talented and gifted was transferred from Atlantic Avenue to the Horace Mann High School building because, by housing a predominantly white middle school in the same building with a predominantly black high school, racial balance for the building could be achieved.

Influence of unions. Union contracts played a role in the development of all three magnet schools. From its inception, Adams Avenue was staffed in large part by teachers who were transferred from Williams Junior High because they lacked seniority there; it can be argued that this mass transfer of relatively new teachers gave them an opportunity to form their own culture, unencumbered by the attitudes of those teachers who had long been established at Williams.

Conversely, the union contract forced the Jesse Owens open education program, when it moved into the Rogers Junior High Building, to accept teachers who were unenthusiastic about open education. And the union contract helped to ensure that the Horace Mann program was staffed, in large part, by older, disillusioned teachers who looked upon proposed innovations as a threat to their professional image instead of as ways to teach more effectively.

Faculty culture. For the purposes of this paper, Metz's most important findings have to do with the importance of a school faculty's culture and the interactions between that culture and the school's principal. In each case, these factors played pivotal roles in determining how each school dealt with its difficulties.

At both Adams Avenue and Jesse Owens, the faculty cultures took it for granted that all students can learn and that it is the teacher's job to help each student do so. At both schools, the faculty culture viewed teaching as a shared endeavor: one in which teachers worked together to help their students improve. In contrast, the faculty culture at Horace Mann viewed teaching as a task that could only be accomplished under ideal circumstances. Because those circumstances did not exist at that school, it was pointless for teachers to put forth extra effort trying to attain unreachable goals.

Interactions with principals. These differences in faculty cultures can be attributed in part--but only in part--to differences in interactions between the faculties and the principals. At Jesse Owens, the principal, Mr. Osten, was universally admired. Metz observed that Osten actually exercised closer supervision over his faculty than did either of the other principals. Yet such supervision was not resented. Rather, the teachers looked upon Osten as a teaching leader who was also willing to fight their battles for them when problems arose with the district central office.

Teachers at Adams Avenue did not view their principal, Mrs. Michaels, in quite the same way that teachers at Jesse Owens viewed Osten. Many teachers resented the district's imposing the IGE program on them with little advance notice, and Mrs. Michaels was to some extent held responsible. Nevertheless, teachers at Adams Avenue generally agreed that she shared their concern about giving the students the best education possible. Consequently, a substantial majority of the teachers recognized the legitimacy of her authority and were willing to put aside their differences about IGE long enough to give the program a chance.

In marked contrast to the situations at both Jesse Owens and Adams Avenue, teachers at Horace Mann viewed the principal--together with the vice principal who actually supervised the day-to-day operations of the middle school program--as agents of the school district, serving to impose the district's will upon the faculty. At Horace Mann, cooperation between the principal and faculty to promote better teaching and learning was partial at best.

Metz points out that, at both Adams Avenue and Jesse Owens, the principals were working with relatively young and inexperienced faculties and, hence, were in favorable positions for

shaping the faculty culture. She also points out that, at a school such as Horace Mann, where a faculty culture is already firmly entrenched, changing it is a difficult task. "If it is the principal's purpose to change that culture, he or she cannot work in accord with its values. But simply to issue commands violating its precepts is likely to generate opposition, sabotage, and personal animosity," she says.

Metz suggests that, although numerous factors help to shape teaching and learning in any given school, the faculty culture is the most important of them. At the same time, if the faculty culture cannot be changed simply by commands from the principal, then alternative means of changing a faculty's culture must be found. In chapters 3 and 4, we will discuss some of those means.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed a number of external forces--from the formal structure of the individual school to the policies of the federal government--that influence what happens in the individual classroom. By drawing on Metz's study of the Heartland School District, we were able to show in some detail how these forces interact.

Analysis of what happened in Heartland showed that the rational bureaucracy--whatever its merits as an ideal--simply does not work as a model describing how a modern school district functions. The bureaucratic model presupposes that the individual school district--free from external constraints--can develop a set of coherent, mutually comprehensive goals and then deploy its resources in such a way as to ensure that those goals are met in the order of their importance. But in Heartland, this did not happen and could not have happened.

At every step of the way, Heartland's central office was faced with constraints imposed by outside influences and with goals that were mutually conflicting. Thus, the original impetus toward creating magnet schools came not from the district's perception that such schools were educationally sound, but rather from a federal court order mandating an end to segregation in Heartland's schools. Similarly, the contract with the local teacher union placed restrictions on the ways in which Heartland could staff the magnet schools.

In the case of Jesse Owens' open education program, the educationally laudable goal of limiting enrollment to those students equipped to accept the personal responsibility required by the program was subordinated to the politically popular goal of allowing program access to everyone. In the case of Horace Mann's program, the educational goal of preserving a middle school's separate physical plant and identity was subordinated to the

legally necessary goal of providing racial balance in the Horace Mann High School building.

In short, the district, far from being free to engage in long-term planning on the basis of the educational needs of its students, was continually forced to engage in *ad hoc* planning addressed to dealing with the contingencies of the moment.

At the same time that everyday realities forced the Heartland School District to depart from the bureaucratic model in many of its decisions, the district tended to follow the model in its emphasis on top-down decision-making--often with negative results. Thus, IGE was instituted at Adams Avenue on approximately one month's notice, and the teachers received only one week of inservice training in the program before they were expected to implement it. And when the district excluded most of the resident teachers at Atlantic Avenue from participation in the early stages of the talented and gifted program there, it reinforced the bitterness and frustration those teachers already felt.

If the typical school district's central office is buffeted by a wide range of forces pursuing often contradictory goals, and if directives issued from that office often have unexpected consequences, what can be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning? The answer, a number of educators suggest, can be found at the level of the individual school.

Although, as we have seen, outside forces exert considerable pressure on the school, the manner in which the faculty culture reacts to such pressure plays a key role in determining the school's quality of education. If the attitudes of the faculty promote effective teaching and learning, effective teaching and learning may well be the result, regardless of the external environment.

Thomas Sergiovanni (1985) notes that "unless things are right with teachers little can happen by way of teaching and learning." In chapter 3 and 4, we will discuss some possible ways to "make things right for teachers." We will begin with a discussion of the collaborative school.

Chapter 3

Collaboration in the Schools: A Vehicle for School Improvement?

In the introduction to this paper, we noted evidence that characteristics of the individual school make a significant difference in teaching and learning: if conditions conducive to teaching and learning could be successfully cultivated at the school site, then successful teaching and learning would be the result. In the chapter on the workplace conditions of teaching, we saw that the typical teacher works alone in the classroom, seldom interacts professionally with his or her colleagues, and receives little or no support from school administrators. We also found that teachers tend to be apprehensive of change, especially if the changes seem to have a "theoretical" rather than a "practical" foundation.

Collaboration: The Rationale

According to Lieberman and Miller (1984), "it is perhaps the greatest irony--and the greatest tragedy of teaching--that so much is carried on in self-imposed and professionally sanctioned isolation." On *a priori* grounds alone, one is inclined to agree with their statement. If teachers perform their work in isolation, neither helping nor being helped by others, then no teacher can benefit from the experience of others:

> Teachers inherit the same images of teaching that we all do, struggle toward proficiency virtually alone, and accumulate as much skill and wisdom as they can by themselves. Superb teachers leave their marks on all of us. They leave no marks on teaching. (Bird and Little 1986)

In addition to the obvious waste involved when each teacher must learn the craft through his or her own experience, without benefitting from the experience of others, it seems plausible that teacher isolation may contribute toward the tendency of teachers to resist changes suggested by educational reformers. Under the best of circumstances, change imposed from (or even suggested by) the outside can be viewed as potentially dangerous. And it would appear plausible that the individual's apprehensions about change would be reinforced when the individual must face that change alone.

Given the belief that improvements at the individual school site can lead to improved teaching and learning and given the belief that the isolation of teachers has a negative effect on teaching and learning, it is not surprising that a number of educational leaders have called for closer professional inter-

action among teachers and between teachers and administrators.

The Collaborative School Defined

Several terms--such as cooperation, collegiality, and collaboration--are used in the literature to describe interactions among teachers and between teachers and principals. We prefer the term *collaboration* and use *collaborative school* to identify schools where that phenomenon is observed. Rosenholtz's definition of *collaboration*--"the extent to which teachers engage in help-related exchange"--focuses on the *kinds* of interactions believed to lead to improved teaching and learning, at the same time that it includes a wide range of such activities.

We can expand on our definition of the collaborative school by introducing the concept of norms. The Schmucks explain norms in the following manner: "A norm exists when, within a school, certain ranges of behavior are approved, others are disapproved and still others are neither approved nor disapproved." They use extra-duty work as an example. If, within a given faculty, members approve of teachers who volunteer for extra assignments once or twice a year but disapprove of teachers who don't volunteer at all or who volunteer for more than three such assignments a year, then a school norm exists regarding volunteering for extra-duty. Presumably, new teachers who are not aware of the faculty's norm regarding extra-duty work will be made aware of it when they deviate from the norm by volunteering for too much or too little extra-duty work and find out that their colleagues disapprove of their actions (or, alternatively, they will be made aware of the norm when they volunteer for the accepted amount of extra-duty work and find that their actions win the approval of their colleagues.)

As we have shown in our chapter on the workplace conditions of teaching, the faculty of the typical public school share norms of isolation. Simply put, these norms discourage such practices as teachers helping one another, giving and accepting advice, and sharing ideas.

In contrast, the faculty of a collaborative school share norms of collaboration. Such norms *encourage* those interactions among teachers that promote effective teaching. What Little (1982) calls the "critical practices of adaptability" are the principal practices encouraged by norms of collaboration:

1. "Teachers engage in frequent, continuous, and increasingly concrete and precise talk about teaching practice" (as opposed to simply gossiping about other teachers, administrators, and students).

2. "Teachers are frequently observed and provided with

useful (if potentially frightening) critiques of their teaching."

3. "Teachers plan, design, research, evaluate, and prepare teaching materials together."

4. "Teachers teach each other the practice of teaching."

For our purposes, collaboration means engaging in "help-related" activities such as the "critical practices of adaptability" outlined above. And the collaborative school is one whose norms encourage teachers to engage in such activities.

A detailed portrait of the collaborative school emerges from recent studies by Patricia T. Ashton and Rodman B. Webb (1986) and by Rosenholtz (forthcoming). The findings of these studies illustrate the actual practices that distinguish the collaborative school from other schools.

The Collaborative School in Action

As part of their study of the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement, Ashton and Webb examined two schools--a traditional junior high school and a more modern middle school. Although the primary focus of their work was not collaboration *per se*, their case studies do serve to highlight the differences between collaborative and noncollaborative practices.

The two schools that Ashton and Webb selected for their study were, in most respects, quite similar. Each enrolled between nine hundred and a thousand sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. Each student body was composed of roughly one-third black students and two-thirds white students. In each school, roughly 45 percent of the students were entitled to free or reduced-price lunches. The principal difference between the two schools was in the way in which they were organized.

The junior high school was organized along traditional lines of grade level and subject specialization. Teachers' classrooms were grouped by subject area throughout the wings of the school. Teachers typically had little or no contact with their colleagues who taught other subjects to the same students.

In contrast, the middle school was organized on the basis of teachers having students in common. Each team of four or five teachers--specializing in different subject areas--worked with a group of 120 to 170 students. Members of a given team were assigned neighboring classrooms. Together they "coordinated their curriculum planning, designed lessons around common themes,

diagnosed the learning problems of specific students, and made team decisions on how best to solve those problems."

Decision-Making

At the middle school, policy decisions were generally made by a steering committee consisting of administrators, team leaders, and representatives from special areas such as physical education. On some issues, the principal might suggest that the committee consult with the individual teaching teams before arriving at decisions. On others, the committee might raise an issue, discuss possible solutions, and leave it up to the individual teams to do as they see fit. Here the middle school principal describes the manner in which individuals could become involved in the decision-making process (the brackets are Ashton and Webb's):

> On the individual level, anybody can come and speak to me or a team leader by themselves. But their next step is on the team basis [where] seven or eight teachers get together and talk about things. Often decisions are made on the team level. Then another step up is the Program Improvement Council, where team leaders or any individual can come with concerns. [Ideas] can be expressed there which have an umbrella effect [of spreading information] over the entire school. Administrators are a part of [the Council] too. So everyone hears the idea directly or indirectly.

In contrast to the decision-making process at the middle school, at the junior high, say Ashton and Webb, "the decision-making responsibility rested ambiguously with the principal and his administrative staff." The principal did discuss issues with his administrative staff and occasionally solicited opinions from individual teachers. Still, as one assistant principal put it, "Ted [the principal] says you're going to do that, and it gets done."

Professional Interactions among Teachers

In their description of a typical day at the middle school, Ashton and Webb provide a capsule view of collaboration in action:

> Evidence of teamwork and community showed itself at the start of each day at the middle school. Before the first bell, faculty gathered in the teachers' lounge to sign in and check the mail for announcements. This gathering was an occasion for sharing news, anecdotes, and companionship, and for starting the day on a note of communal enthusiasm. During the day, teachers spent most of their time in their classrooms but, when the schedule allowed, they used the team planning

room for parent conferences, meetings with students, coffee breaks, or formal and informal meetings with members of their own teams.

At the middle school, members of a teaching team typically found occasions to meet together informally as well as formally. As one teacher's comment makes clear, the focus of the informal meetings was generally the students:

> Lunch time is our big social time. As a matter of fact we even have special lunches. About once a month, we all bring in some things and eat together. We get a lot accomplished at lunch time talking about the kids. We don't necessarily sit there with the intention of talking about the kids but when you have just spent 4 hours with them, that's what you're thinking about. So that's what we talk about.

According to Ashton and Webb, teachers at the middle school felt united in their concern for the students, as illustrated by one teacher's comment:

> I just feel...there is no time here at school where we're not talking about something that'll benefit the kids in some way. It's not that we plan it that way; it just happens that way. That's where our concern is.

Another teacher says that the middle school's faculty used their teaching team as a resource in helping them to cope with students' problems (Ashton and Webb's brackets):

> If I become aware of a problem, it is very important for me to communicate with. . . my team about the student and the problem. On our team, we're constantly involved in the process of trying to help students. [Because we all teach] the same students [we can provide and get] lots of help.

In contrast to the teamwork in evidence at the middle school, teachers at the junior high school typically went their own way. Even when teachers were thrown together on formal committees, there was a tendency for teachers to divide the work up according to their specialties, with each teacher doing his or her share of the work alone. Ashton and Webb cite a member of a committee formed to prepare for an evaluation visit (their brackets):

> We started off meeting. . . together each day, each third period. And then things broke down so that. . . . Sally was doing some things with language and reading [with which] Francis and I weren't familiar [and] couldn't do. Francis was worrying with the Science Fair and the science curriculum. And then I started doing social studies. We sort of all branched off. It was just easier to go our separate ways.

According to Ashton and Webb, the junior high school offered "few opportunities to share ideas." Teachers seldom talked with one another, and when they did, the conversation was seldom related to the tasks of teaching. "Decision making did not necessitate faculty discussions because school decisions were made by administrators, and classroom decisions by individual teachers." Asked if the faculty members at the school shared a common philosophy, one teacher responded, "I don't know. I really don't know about that; I can't tell." When asked the same question, the principal replied that there were "40 teachers in the school and about as many different philosophies."

The practices of the middle school discussed above reflect norms of collaboration; the practices of the junior high school reflect norms of isolation. At the middle school, teachers and administrators viewed both teaching and governance as collegial activities (the principal had the last say in matters of school policy, but the teachers played a significant role). At the junior high school, both teachers and administrators considered teaching to be the job of teachers operating individually and policy-making to be the job of administrators.

A Cautionary Note

Ashton and Webb advise that their study of these two schools was not intended to show that one organization was better than the other; rather, it was intended to be a means of developing a tentative hypothesis regarding the relationship between a school's formal organization and the teachers' sense of efficacy. Similarly, our purpose in drawing from Ashton and Webb's study is not to claim that one method of formal organization is superior to the other or even that one method of formal organization promotes collaborative practices whereas the other does not. Surely some schools organized along traditional lines qualify as collaborative schools, whereas some schools with faculties formally organized into teaching teams are conspicuously lacking in collaborative practices. Although a school's formal organization may indeed retard or encourage teachers to collaborate, other, perhaps more important factors shaping teachers' interactions are the school's leadership and the faculty's norms.

Teacher Relationships In Collaborative Schools

Another recent study casting light on collaborative practices and attitudes in schools is Rosenholtz's (forthcoming) analysis of seventy-eight schools in Tennessee. On the basis of questionnaires in which teachers described the extent to which the faculties at their schools engaged in collaborative practices, Rosenholtz separated the schools into three categories--thirteen

collaborative schools, fifteen isolated schools, and fifty temperately isolated schools (the schools that fell somewhere between isolated and collaborative). Rosenholtz then interviewed twenty-one randomly selected teachers from seven of the collaborative schools, twenty-one randomly selected teachers from seven of the isolated schools, and thirty-two randomly selected teachers from ten of the temperately isolated schools. She makes no mention of the school's formal organizational structures.

Sharing about Instruction

Rosenholtz found that, when teachers in collaborative settings talked with one another, they usually shared instructionally related ideas and materials. For instance, one teacher said the faculty talks often about the instructional program, the curriculum, and students' progress. When teachers shared information about a particular student, it was usually for the purpose of finding ways to help the student learn more effectively. One teacher said the schools' faculty discuss how to reward the highest achievers and how to help the lowest achievers.

In another collaborative setting, kindergarten teachers plan their activities together. For example, two teachers would plan the week's math activities while two other teachers planned the reading activities. One teacher commented to Rosenholtz that it helps to pool ideas from several people instead of each having to plan their work alone.

In contrast, none of the teachers from isolated settings mentioned instructional planning as a form of sharing. When they shared information about students, the sharing usually took the form of swapping stories about a child's errant behavior or sympathizing with one another, rather than pooling resources to help the child.

In a 1985 article, Rosenholtz describes the ubiquitous and informal nature of teachers' sharing about their work:

> In collaborative settings, teachers interact whenever the opportunity arises--in training sessions, faculty meetings, hallways, teachers' lounges, and classrooms. This interaction stems from professional rather than social concerns and involves a greater number of faculty members than do the social conversations that typify less effective schools.

Perceptions of Teacher Leaders

Teachers from collaborative and isolated settings also differed markedly in describing their teacher leaders. Teachers

from collaborative settings regarded as teacher leaders those who showed initiative and willingness to experiment with new ideas, who offered motivation to other teachers, and who were willing and able to help other teachers solve instructional problems. One teacher said that the leaders set a good example for how to work with children.

In contrast, teachers from isolated settings rarely equated teacher leadership with instructional endeavors. Instead, 61 percent of the respondents equated teacher leadership with union involvement or other activities not related to schooling.

Helping Behaviors

For contrasting the attitudes of teachers from isolated settings with those of teachers from collaborative settings, responses to one of the questions asked by Rosenholtz were particularly revealing. She asked teachers what they do when they have a particularly difficult problem with a student.

Based on teachers' responses, Rosenholtz arrived at four conclusions. First, the more collaborative the school, the more likely the teachers were to seek help from students' parents, the principal, and other teachers. Second, for teachers from isolated schools, student problems invariably meant behavior problems, whereas for teachers from collaborative schools, student problems also included academic ones.

Third, teachers from isolated schools tended to see students as the *source* of problems and hence saw punishment as the solution, whereas teachers from collaborative schools tended to see students as *having* problems and hence attempted to identify their source.

Rosenholtz's final conclusion is a corollary to the preceding one. Teachers from isolated schools tended to ask for help in punishing problem students (for example, sending the student to the principal to be paddled), whereas teachers from collaborative schools tended to seek outside expertise to help the students solve their problems (for example, asking the student's parents about factors in the students' homelife that might affect his or her performance).

"In collaborative schools," Rosenholtz wrote in her 1985 article, "teachers increasingly come to believe that student learning is possible with even the most difficult students and that they have access to the knowledge and skills to reach such students."

In summary, Rosenholtz's findings paint a clear picture of what distinguishes the school with collaborative norms from

schools in which norms of isolation prevail. In collaborative schools, teachers plan instruction together and share ideas, they identify teacher leaders as those teachers who promote improved instructional practices, and they do not hesitate to seek help from other teachers, the principal, and parents when faced with children they consider to have problems.

On the face of it, all these activities would seem to lead to improved teaching and learning. But does empirical evidence exist showing that students actually perform better in schools with norms of collaboration than they do in schools with norms of isolation? To that question we now turn.

Collaborative Schools: Are They Effective?

Rosenholtz (forthcoming) may have been the first researcher to attempt a large-scale statistical analysis of the relationship between teacher collaboration and student achievement. Quantitative data gathered from her statewide representative sample of seventy-eight elementary schools in eight school districts show that collaboration is a strong predictor of student achievement gains in reading and math. The gains were measured with one cohort of students from second through fourth grades. A regression analysis performed by Rosenholtz controlled for school socioeconomic status, school size, teacher experience, teachers' verbal ability, and pupil-teacher ratio.

Several case studies and the results of the effective schools research also suggest a correspondence between collaborative norms and improved teaching and learning.

Little (1982) conducted case studies of four schools identified as successful on the basis of student achievement on standardized achievement scores and two schools identified as unsuccessful on the basis of the same criteria. She found that the successful schools were characterized by frequent teacher evaluations and feedback on them, teachers talking with one another about teaching, teachers working together to design their classes, and teachers teaching each other about teaching. All these collaborative practices were conspicuously absent in the unsuccessful schools.

From their review of research on effective schools, Stewart C. Purkey and Marshall S. Smith (1983) identified four process variables that "define the general concept of school culture and climate": collaborative planning and collegial relationships, sense of community, clear goals and high expectations commonly shared, and order and discipline. Concerning the first of these variables, they say:

> Collegiality serves many purposes. Chief among them are that it breaks down barriers between departments and among teachers/administrators, encourages the kind of intellectual sharing that can lead to consensus, and promotes feelings of unity and commonality among the staff.

Over a two-year period, Peter Coleman (1983) administered a project intended to improve the educational climate in nine British Columbia elementary schools. In a preliminary report on the project, he asserted that "norms of collegiality and continuous improvement are clearly essential to school self-renewal."

In Rutter and associates' (1979) longitudinal analysis of performance by a group of students in London's inner city schools, the more successful schools were characterized by intellectual sharing, collaborative planning, and collegial work among the teachers.

Little (1986) studied two staff development programs designed by the same specialist and addressing the same teaching practices. One produced substantial long-term results in the schools that participated, whereas the other had little or no effect on its participants. Little attributed the difference in results to differences in the extent to which program coordinators, teachers, and principals worked together to develop and implement the programs.

In the unsuccessful program, Little said, teachers participated in training sessions lasting a few days and then returned to their classrooms to implement the programs on their own. In the successful program, the program coordinator, teachers, and principals worked together on training *and* implementation: over a three year period following the initial training session, the coordinator, teachers, and principals all played active roles in refining the program and carrying it out. In essence, the successful program was the one that incorporated collaborative practices into the manner in which it was carried out.

We have already cited Rosenholtz (forthcoming) in describing the attitudes and practices prevalent in collaborative schools. In the same study, Rosenholtz analyzed the effect of collaborative norms on teachers' perception of teacher learning.

Rosenholtz found that teachers felt they continued to learn about their profession throughout their careers where the following conditions existed: schools set clearly defined goals for teaching improvement, principals used teacher evaluations as tools to help teachers improve, principals and faculties shared values about teaching, and collaboration between principals and faculties and among faculty members was the norm. Conversely, where these conditions did not prevail, teachers tended to believe that they had learned all they need to know about teaching within the first

few years after entering the profession.

To the degree that successful staff development programs and continuous teacher learning have an effect on student achievement, these studies by Little and Rosenholtz would support the proposition that norms of collaboration contribute to improved teaching and learning. As Roland Barth (1986) points out, "No profession can survive, let alone flourish, when its members are cut off from others and from the rich knowledge base on which success and excellence depend."

Student Enthusiasm and Interracial Cooperation

In her study of the Heartland School District, discussed in chapter 2, Metz did not attempt to correlate teaching practices and faculty norms with student learning. Yet her study does suggest that teaching practices, faculty norms, and student attitudes toward learning are all interrelated.

Heartland is a school district in which 54 percent of the middle school students come from minority groups, 50 percent are from families whose financial situations qualify the students for the district's free lunch program, 66 percent of the students score in the bottom 50 percent nationwide on standardized reading tests, and 64 percent score in the bottom half on standardized math tests. Both Adams Avenue School for Individually Guided Education and Jesse Owens Open Education School serve student populations roughly comparable in composition to that of the district as a whole. In contrast, Horace Mann School for the Gifted and Talented serves a student population of which only 43 percent belong to minority groups, only 25 percent are entitled to free lunches, only 24 percent score in the bottom half nationwide on standardized reading tests, and only 20 percent score in the bottom half on standardized math tests.

Given such figures, one might be tempted to predict that teachers and students at Horace Mann would be much more enthusiastic about teaching and learning than those at the other two schools. Yet, according to Metz, the reverse was true. How could this be?

In part, the answer seems to rest in a complex set of interrelated factors including relationships between principals and faculty, faculty norms, school goals, and school technologies. At Adams Avenue, the faculty thought of themselves as "caring about kids" and thought of their principal, Mrs. Michaels, as feeling the same way. At Jesse Owens, the faculty generally viewed their principal, Mr. Osten, as being both a teaching leader and the defender of their school against unwanted interference on the part of the district's central office. At Horace Mann, in contrast, the vice-principal in charge of the middle school was regarded as

little more than a flunky passing down orders from higher authorities.

Metz notes that, at both Adams Avenue and Jesse Owens, teachers considered it important to know the students as individuals and to meet their needs as such. They also "assumed that students who were treated with personal respect would return that respect." In contrast, teachers at Horace Mann tended to look upon their students with indifference, if not outright hostility, and tended to emphasize covering a given quantity of material in class, rather than meeting the needs of individual students.

At each of the three schools, school technology tended to reinforce faculty norms that were apparently already in place. In the IGE program at Adams Avenue, each team of four teachers (who specialized in different areas) worked with one block of students. Within each classroom, students were grouped according to skill level, and the members of each group worked together at a table. Such arrangements encouraged cooperation among teachers and encouraged students to work together. The program at Jesse Owens, while differing in many details, placed similar emphasis on cooperative teaching and learning.

In contrast, despite Horace Mann's relatively more gifted student body, this school offered nothing special in the way of goals or teaching technologies. Each teacher basically did what he or she had always done before, meaning, in practice, a heavy emphasis on lecture, recitation, and seatwork. Teachers generally moved all students through the same curriculum at the same pace; some would find the work too easy and become bored, whereas others would be forced to strain to avoid falling by the wayside.

Although Metz's study yields no hard data on the relationship between these factors and student achievement, she did find that students at both Adams Avenue and Jesse Owens expressed considerably more enthusiasm about school and their teachers than did students at Horace Mann. Metz also notes that interracial cooperation in the classroom and interracial friendships among the students were both more common at Jesse Owens and Adams Avenue than they were at Horace Mann. At the same time, she points out, much more racial tension among the students was evident at Horace Mann than at the other two schools.

It can be argued that no significant body of evidence exists demonstrating correlations between positive teacher-student relationships or positive interracial relationships among students and student achievement in the classroom. Yet it can be reasonably argued that such positive relationships are intrinsically worthwhile.

Collegial Management Styles

The merits of participative management--one component of the collaborative school--are the subject of a body of literature too large to be reviewed here. A few examples of recent studies illustrate the benefits of the participative management style. Jann E. Azumi and Serge Madhere (1983) attempted to determine the relative effectiveness of feedback/socialization and programming/sanctions as methods used by school administrators to achieve coordination and control of their staffs. Based on questionnaires returned by 850 classroom teachers in 52 elementary schools in an urban school system, they concluded that feedback/socialization (coordination is achieved through the continuous flow of information between administration and staff) was more effective than programming/sanctions (coordination relies on rules with sanctions and rewards).

In their analysis of schools winning awards in the 1982-83 Secondary School Recognition Program, John E. Roueche and George A. Baker III (1986) found that effective principals were typically committed both to instructional leadership and to participative decision-making. They concluded that such principals "contribute to organizational health through strong leadership, staff involvement, systematic evaluation of instruction, and rewarding and recognizing their faculty and staff."

Arthur J. Land (1986), in his study of the relationship between educational quality and teacher salaries, suggests that productive teacher motivation may be tied to two factors: "personal *dissatisfaction* with the status quo" combined with a perception of "a strong degree of control as well as a strong commitment to correct or change" that status quo. Put another way, Land is suggesting that the productively motivated teacher is one who has problems to solve and is "provided timely opportunity to use personal abilities, skills, and experience" to solve those problems. In Land's view, this requires "an administrative style that is distinctly participative and collegial in nature."

Finally, Ruth Bebermeyer (1982) characterizes well the collaborative style of effective instructional leaders:

> What is it that the leader initiates? On closer examination of the indicators of effective leaders, one is attracted to the conclusion that the leader initiates *cooperation.* How? By cooperating--by initiating practices and processes that take into account the desires and dignity of others, whether by shared decision-making, open communication, participative problem-solving or other ways. The leader initiates cooperation not only by personal example but also by establishing and encouraging cooperative structures, whether that means collegial teams in inservice activities or teaching or learning teams in classrooms.

Conclusion

In the collaborative school, teachers cooperate with one another on a variety of tasks related to school improvement and their own professional development. Specifically, they help one another to improve their practice of teaching through such means as encouraging experimentation with new ideas, mutually solving instructional problems, planning instruction together, and seeking aid for students who have academic problems.

Do collaborative practices such as these lead to improved teaching and learning? To date few studies have examined this issue directly. But research on effective schools and several studies of school improvement efforts point to a strong association between collaborative norms/practices and student achievement, school renewal, and teachers' openness to learning.

Moreover, research suggests other benefits of collaboration. Metz observed that schools whose teachers cooperated with one another were also characterized by cooperation among students and interracial harmony. Other studies point to the efficacy of collaborative management styles.

Given the problems associated with past efforts at educational reform that have *not* focused on interactions among teachers at the school site, a strong case can be made that the fostering of collaborative norms within the school well deserves attention by educators.

If we assume that norms of collaboration should be cultivated within the schools, our next task is to cultivate those norms.

Chapter 4

Introducing Collaboration in Schools

Educators may readily accept the proposition that norms of collaboration lead to improved teaching and learning. But how do they go about introducing such norms in a school whose teachers have grown accustomed to working in isolation from one another? To overcome organizational inertia, some powerful agent must initiate the change.

In most schools, that agent is the principal. As Susan Rosenholtz (forthcoming) notes, "norms of collaboration don't simply just happen." Rather, they "are structured in the workplace by frequent faculty contact and continuous opportunities for teacher interaction." As she notes, the principal is the individual in the best position to make those opportunities for interaction possible.

Although the principal is almost certainly a *necessary* agent for introducing collaborative norms into a school (his or her opposition or even indifference will defeat any such effort), the principal is not a *sufficient* agent, acting alone, to sustain such norms. Support from key members of the teaching staff must be obtained if collaboration is to take root.

Although the focus of the reforms discussed here is the individual school, the school district can play an important supporting role. To the extent that the district's central office provides the necessary resources--notably, time for interactions among staff and administrators--the central office helps make collaboration in the school a reality.

The Principal's Role

Over the years people have debated whether the principal shapes a school's norms or the school's norms shape the principal's attitudes and actions. Some have suggested that the norms prevailing at a school exert more influence over the principal than vice versa; that is, the principal's behavior is dictated by the school's norms, and the principal's effect on those norms in minimal. An example of the opposing view is found in Fred Hechinger's foreword to James Lipham's *Effective Principal, Effective School* (1981):

> I have never seen a good school with a poor principal or a poor school with a good principal. I have seen unsuccessful schools turned around into successful ones and, regrettably,

outstanding schools slide rapidly into decline. In each case, the rise or fall could readily be traced to the quality of the principal.

The truth of the matter would seem to lie somewhere in the middle. The norms a principal encounters when he or she steps into the post are going to have at least some effect on the principal's attitudes and will either constrain or reinforce his or her actions. Over time, however, the principal's actions and attitudes will exert at least some influence in reshaping those norms.

Whatever the limits on a principal's power to shape a school's norms, it seems clear that, if any one person can influence these norms, the principal is the individual in the best position to do so. As Edgar A. Kelley (1980) notes, the principal "is most responsible for the climate of the school and for the outcomes of productivity and satisfaction attained by students and staff. The simple truth is that others respond, directly or indirectly, to what the principal does as well as to what he does not do."

The principal who wishes to encourage collaboration in his or her school can make use of a number of strategies, including advising teachers on their practice of teaching, running interference for teachers who desire to interact with one another, building collaborative processes into existing school structures, and modeling effective procedures of classroom observation and teacher evaluation.

Advising Teachers

One step a principal can take toward instituting collaborative norms is to be available when teachers need help in dealing with their classroom problems (of course, this assumes the principal has the skills needed to actually provide meaningful help). Doing so requires both tact and perseverance, inasmuch as teachers may be reluctant to admit that they have problems and may be skeptical about the principal's ability to solve them.

Once the staff come to perceive of the principal as a leader who can help with their teaching problems, the rewards will be worth the effort required to reach this goal. When teachers grow accustomed to asking for and receiving useful advice from the principal, they become more receptive to the idea of asking one another for advice and giving it. Both Rosenholtz and Bird and Little found that schools characterized by a high degree of cooperation among the staff were also characterized by a high degree of interaction between staff and the principal--with the latter kind of cooperation setting the stage for the former.

Running Interference and Providing Incentives

In addition to suggesting ways in which teachers can improve their teaching, the principal who wishes to promote collaboration must make sure that faculty members have the resources needed to make collaboration feasible. For example, a principal may decide to encourage the practice of having teachers plan lessons together. In that case, classes must be scheduled in such a way that teachers have time during the school day to plan classes together.

The same applies when teachers wish to observe each other teach. The schedule must permit one teacher to be free while the other teaches, and vice versa. Both teachers must also be free at the same time to discuss the results of their observations. Allan Glatthorn (1982) recommends organizing peer observation teams "at the end of the school year prior to its initiation" so that "the school master schedule can reflect these observing and conferring needs."

The principal's role as a support person need not be limited to removing barriers that impede collaboration among faculty members: the principal can also provide incentives that serve to recognize and reward such collaboration. Carolyn L. Ruck (1986) suggests that, when allocating funds for new materials, preference might be given to teachers actively engaged in collaborative practices. Similarly, when allocating funds for field trips, preference might be given to those trips that involve two or more teachers working together on a project.

Other, less material, rewards can also work as incentives to promote collaboration. As Ruck points out, "The message 'You're doing a great job' is not one that teachers hear often." Simply complimenting teachers for their efforts at working together can serve as a powerful reinforcer, she says.

Patience is an important commodity in a school implementing collaborative practices. Ruck drives this point home by borrowing an analogy from Seymour Papert (author of *Mindstorms: Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas*, New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1980). When introducing a new program, a programmer expects to encounter "bugs." This doesn't mean the program is a failure; it only means that the bugs must be eliminated. Similarly, when using a particular collaborative technique for the first time, teachers can encounter unexpected difficulties. This doesn't mean the technique is ineffective; it only means that the bugs must be ironed out. The principal who clearly explains this process to his or her faculty, emphasizing that initial difficulties in trying out new techniques will not be equated with failure, may find that teachers quickly become emboldened to try those new techniques.

Modifying School Structures

A quick way to get at the heart of collaboration is to directly encourage teachers to work with one another. Indeed, Richard and Patricia Schmuck suggest that the "principal has more power over modifying the structures and procedures of the school then he or she has over modifying the norms of the school." Rather than becoming frustrated at being unable to change a school's norms, the principal can simply institute structures that promote cooperation.

One such structure is the faculty meeting, which, say the Schmucks, provides a variety of opportunities to foster collaboration. First, the staff could be encouraged to submit, well in advance of the meeting, issues they feel should be considered. The principal could then use this input in shaping the meeting's agenda. Consequently, the meeting would have a shared agenda--one that addresses the concerns of the principals and of the faculty.

Second, the agenda could be distributed to faculty members well before the meeting. In this way, they would have an opportunity to discuss the issues with one another beforehand.

Third, the principal can involve the faculty in running the meeting. Instead of having the principal chair the meetings, the task can be rotated among the faculty members.

None of the steps suggested above is particularly daring. But, taken together, they can help transform the faculty meeting from an instrument through which the principal promulgates policy into an instrument through which the faculty as a whole, with the principal as leader, develops policy.

The faculty committee is another vehicle that can be used to encourage collaboration among the staff, the Schmucks claim. If the committee members perceive that they are actually expected to study a problem and come up with solutions and if they perceive that their recommendations will be taken seriously, then the committee will actively work together and--in the process--encourage norms of collaboration.

There are also other ways in which a principal can use faculty meetings to foster norms of collaboration. Roland Barth writes that, when he was a principal, he provided time at the beginning of each faculty meeting to highlight teacher achievements. He also rotated the location of faculty meetings so that each teacher had an opportunity to serve as host, sharing with the rest of the faculty unique features of his or her curriculum or classroom activities. A variation of this approach, practiced by a principal described by Ruck, is to set aside time at faculty

meetings for teachers to describe inservices they have attended, innovations they have introduced into their classrooms, and the like.

Observing and Evaluating Teachers

In chapter 3, we listed what Judith Warren Little (1982) called the "critical practices of adaptability" that were encouraged by norms of collaboration. One of these critical practices is providing teachers with frequent and useful critiques of their teaching. In a school with highly developed norms of collaboration, such critiques can frequently be supplied by a teacher's colleagues. Where such norms have not already been developed, the principal must take the lead in conducting frequent and useful classroom observations and evaluations of his or her staff. As we have seen, such assistance by the principal encourages teachers, in turn, to assist one another.

It should be emphasized that frequency of evaluation is not enough: for evaluations to be useful, teachers must perceive that the evaluations actually help them to improve in their work. Linda Darling-Hammond and colleagues (1983) describe "four minimal conditions for the successful operation of a teacher evaluation system." First, all interested parties must share an "understanding of the criteria and processes" involved. Second, there must be a "shared sense" that those criteria "capture the most important aspects of teaching." Third, teachers must perceive that the procedure helps them in their teaching, while principals must perceive that it helps them provide instructional leadership. And finally, the teachers and principal must perceive that the "procedure achieves a balance between control and autonomy" for everyone involved.

According to Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little (1985), reciprocity between the principal and the teacher must prevail if observation and evaluation for instructional improvement are to be meaningful. Such reciprocity requires the following conditions:

1. "The observer must *assert* the knowledge and skill needed to help a practitioner of a complex art."

2. "The teacher must *defer* in some way to the observer's assertion," that is, the teacher must accept the observer's claim to possess the skill and knowledge needed to help the teacher.

3. "The observer must *display* the knowledge and skill which s/he necessarily asserts."

4. "The teacher must *respond* to the observer's assertions, at least by *trying* some change in

behavior, materials, role with students, or perspective on teaching."

5. "The observer's performance must improve along with the teacher's, and by much the same means: training, practice, and observant commentary from someone who was present."

The principal who hopes to use observation and evaluation to help teachers improve must expect to expend considerable time and energy in doing so. In those schools studied by Bird and Little that had strong programs of observation and evaluation, the principals had done considerable reading to improve their knowledge of teaching and of observation and evaluation practices, and they had taken the time to attend training sessions in these areas. In one junior high school, each of the forty-five teachers was observed by the principal or vice-principal for five successive days in the fall and five successive days in the spring.

After a principal has successfully established observation by administrators as a tool for helping teachers to improve, the path has been cleared for introducing peer observation. Bird and Little found that in schools where teachers thought that observation by the principal had helped them to improve, they were receptive to observing and being observed by their colleagues. Again, time and energy are necessities: teachers cannot be expected to meet the requirements of reciprocity outlined above unless they have some preliminary training in observation and in providing useful commentary on what they have observed.

The principle of reciprocity has applications that go far beyond the areas of observation and evaluation. To effectively introduce collaborative norms into a school, a principal must be an effective teaching leader. This means that he or she must assert and display the mastery of teaching and the leadership that entitle him or her to lead the staff through a period of change. Similarly, the staff must accept and respond to the principal's efforts to initiate changes. And, in the overall effort to institute norms of collaboration, the principal's skills at leadership must grow along with the teachers' skills at teaching.

Comprehensive Strategies

When introducing a reform so far-reaching as the collaborative school, it is helpful to know what others have already done along similar lines and how they have done it.

The experiences of schools that have successfully implemented collaboration suggest that collaborative norms can be introduced into a school in either of two ways. One is to adopt a

comprehensive approach: assessing the school's culture and the ways in which that culture does or does not serve the needs of the school's population, identifying norms that need to be changed, and determining specific steps to take to improve those norms.

The other strategy follows a more limited and indirect approach: the principal identifies a particular problem confronting the school and solicits the help of the staff (and, in some instances, the students) in solving that problem. By thus involving the entire school community in working together to solve one problem, norms of collaboration are encouraged.

In this section we consider three models of school improvement that exemplify the comprehensive approach. The merits of the indirect approach are the subject of the following section.

Reaching Success through Involvement

Reaching Success through Involvement (RSI) is a strategy for initiating change at the school building level developed at Vanderbilt University. By 1986 RSI had already been implemented in fourteen schools in five states and was being introduced in twenty-eight additional schools in five other states.

As explained by Willis J. Furtwengler (1986), RSI is a long-term (twelve to thirty-six month) strategy for school improvement. Its eleven steps run from recognition by the principal and assistant principals of their responsibility for the school's overall effectiveness, through formation of a planning council, development of inservice programs, collection of data to assess progress being made, and (at the end of each year) election of new members of the planning council.

Perhaps the most striking features of RSI are (1) its focus on continuous planning and action throughout the school year and (2) its emphasis on involvement of participants from all segments of the school community. Thus, the planning council (consisting of administrators and faculty members) and a student leadership group take part in a three-day retreat to focus on leadership training and problem-solving activities. At the retreat, task forces (with student representation) are formed to solve specific school problems. Each task force holds at least four half-day meetings during the school year to assess the progress it is making and determine what further work needs to be done.

Although RSI is a strategy focusing on improvement at the level of the individual school, it clearly requires strong support from the school district's central office if it is to work. It is difficult to see how RSI could work without the expenditure of considerable time by both administrators and faculty. Asking faculty members to use their "spare" time for the purpose would

place an unfair burden on them and likely would incur their resentment. And if the time is to come from their regular working hours, substitutes must be provided or additional staff must be hired.

Organizational Development

Another comprehensive strategy for school improvement that encourages collaborative practices is organizational development (OD). As explained by Richard A. Schmuck and colleagues (1985), OD "is aimed at improving the ability of the subsystems of a school district to change themselves." Schmuck and his colleagues base their strategy on four postulates.

First, "Schools are constituted of components--individuals, facilities, books, and so on--which are further organized into subsystems."

Second, "As living systems, schools are goal-directed. Usually, however, the goals are stated so vaguely by school personnel that they cannot be recognized even when they are being reached." In many cases, a school's stated goals may be at variance with those goals that the school's activities actually promote. To the extent that this happens, the school must "either (1) live with the contradiction, (2) close off communication, which advertises the ambiguity, (3) change its proclaimed goals, or (4) change its behavior."

Third, schools, like other living systems, display varying degrees of openness in communication. Administrators may communicate with school boards, curriculum committees may be in touch with outside experts, and teacher organizations may be in contact with teacher organizations from outside the school or the district. Such contacts bring outside influences and ideas to bear within the organization. "Strain within schools occurs when one subsystem (such as the curriculum division) brings new practices into the district and another subsystem (such as a school building staff) resists trying the new practices."

Finally, "Schools maintain many resources and plans that at any one time are not being used." While these plans "will inevitably include a number of irrelevant or even potentially deleterious practices, a school can be adaptive only if it encourages the emergence of whatever resources exist for optimizing its educative functions."

Given the four postulates outlined above, it is not surprising that OD attempts to improve the ability of schools to change themselves through clarifying school goals, improving communication among various elements of the school community, and tapping the school's unused resources. To do so, OD employs the

services of an outside facilitator, who works closely with the district's central office, the school's principal, and the school's faculty.

Three features of OD are especially worth noting. First, OD emphasizes the importance of developing a plan that fits the situation at a particular school. The facilitator must be satisfied that a particular plan will work before implementing it and must be prepared to monitor it and modify it as necessary.

Second, OD includes plans for terminating the consultation process when the consultant's services are no longer needed and to institutionalize the changes that have been introduced. This includes training a cadre of school personnel to continue the work after the facilitator has gone.

Third, OD places a strong emphasis on encouraging and developing collaborative processes. Facilitators train participants in ways of better expressing themselves and listening to one another. The facilitators, through group discussions with participants, attempt to identify group norms, distinguishing between those that simply reflect current practices and those that describe how members of the school community would like things to be. For example, teachers may practice norms of isolation simply because that is the way things have always been done and each individual teacher is reluctant to be the first to do things differently. Through group discussions, each teacher may find that he or she is not the only one who would like to engage in more collaborative practices. Once group support for such practices becomes apparent, participation in such practices becomes much easier.

Although OD, like Reaching Success through Involvement, typically employs outside facilitators to work with members of a school's population, many OD principles and methods can be employed usefully by administrators who have no formal training in the subject. The handbook by Schmuck and colleagues provides considerable information along those lines.

Schenley High School Teaching Center

An ambitious program to break down the barriers that isolate teachers is the teaching clinic at the Schenley High School Teaching Center in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

During the year prior to the opening of the clinic, teachers throughout the school system were involved in inservice training on "instruction in general and effective teaching in particular," writes Lawrence E. Davis (1986). At the same time, administrators received "intense training" in instructional leadership. Individuals selected to be Clinical Resident Teachers and Resource

Clinical Resident Teachers received sixty hours of specialized training.

Once the clinic opened, participating teachers were exposed to a wide range of activities designed to promote professional interaction. At the clinic, visiting teachers, under the leadership of Clinical Resident Teachers and Resource Clinical Resident Teachers, engage in group observation of one another, collectively analyze the data obtained from such observation, and provide one another with feedback. They are also observed by Clinical Resident Teachers on a one-to-one basis, and they engage in seminars and meetings devoted to instructional issues.

Followup studies show that participation in the teaching clinics has a strong carryover effect, says Davis. Many of the teachers who participate in the clinic actively promote mutual observation and feedback practices with their fellow teachers when they return to their home schools.

Administrators interested in the Pittsburgh Public Schools model should note the amount of time and effort the school district put into its program. Unless a school district is willing to invest an equal amount of time and energy into such a clinic, its accomplishments will probably not match those at Schenley.

The Modest Approach

Although Reaching Success through Involvement, organizational development, and the teacher clinic developed by the Pittsburgh Public Schools differ from one another in many important respects, they share one element in common: all are comprehensive programs intended to produce far-reaching changes in the ways in which administrators and teachers within a school or a school district approach their profession.

Many schools and school districts have no need for such sweeping changes; in some cases efforts at initiating such changes can even be counterproductive. Kelley notes that, where levels of satisfaction with the current situation are high, changes are unlikely to produce many positive results. If proposed changes would require resources that are not available, things may be better left unchanged: "It is often better to do nothing than it is to create new expectations which cannot be fulfilled."

Although school administrators may determine that sweeping changes such as those envisioned in the RSI strategy or in the Pittsburgh Public Schools program are unsuitable for their needs, they may find that other, less sweeping changes may help solve specific problems. At the same time, those changes may help to strengthen norms of collaboration. Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller

offer two examples that serve to clarify the point.

The faculty and administration at Big City High School felt the need to develop alternative programs to serve the school's diverse student population. In collaboration with a nearby major university, Big City High established a Teacher Center in the school building. At first, the center was headed by a university staff person; later, control was handed over to one of the high school's teachers, who was freed from regular classroom duties.

Over time, the Teacher Center became a meeting place for teachers who "wanted to plan for change in present structures and procedures," say Lieberman and Miller.

> Teachers came to the Center individually and in groups. They came to read, to reflect on their teaching, and to plan together. After three years, the Center is very much a part of the school. It has become an important school institution.

It is important to note that the Teacher Center succeeded because it met a perceived need of the faculty: the need for a place where teachers could work together to plan out strategies for meeting the needs of their students.

Lieberman and Miller's other example is based on "what happened in a medium-sized, urban school district when teachers became involved in district-wide improvements and their own professional development."

There was a consensus among principals and faculty at the district's schools that the district lacked remedial materials in language arts and reading that elementary teachers could use in their regular classroom instruction. A group of principals and teachers sought the support of the assistant superintendent of curriculum for a project involving teachers in materials development. In response to the request of the teachers and principals, the district hired forty-five teachers to work for two weeks during the summer on developing materials for classroom use. Three pilot schools developed their own methods of introducing the materials into the classroom. One comment by the assistant superintendent is particularly worth noting: "The district level curriculum staff served as consultants to the schools on an invitational basis. That is, the district staff responded to expressed staff needs rather than taking a leadership position." Six months into the project, the assistant superintendent indicated that it was generally viewed as a success.

It appears that both the Teacher Center at Big City High School and the project for developing remedial materials in the urban school district strengthened norms of collaboration: together teachers planned for improvement at the Teacher Center and

teachers worked together to develop materials for remedial instruction. But in neither case was the reform introduced for the purpose of increasing collaboration as such. Rather, the reforms were a response to the perceived needs of the teachers in matters regarding instruction and curriculum. In the process of addressing those needs, collaboration took place.

Additional guidelines and practical suggestions for implementing collaborative practices in the schools can be found in *Ventures in Good Schooling: A Cooperative Model for a Successful Secondary School*, developed jointly by the National Education Association and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. This booklet is intended to serve as "a practical tool that would help teachers and principals examine their responsibilities to create a quality instructional program at the school site." Drawing on a large body of research, the booklet provides indicators denoting characteristics of effective schools.

The NEA and the NASSP encourage principals and teachers to use the booklet together as a means of determining where their school stands and where they want it to go. In essence, *Ventures* provides a framework in which principals and teachers can work together to promote school improvement--and, in the process, to foster collaboration among teachers and between teachers and the principal.

Planning and Resources

As we have seen, collaborative structures vary from comprehensive, districtwide strategies to simple changes in the way faculty meetings are run. Among the variables that govern the choice of a structure appropriate for a particular district or school are the perceived need for collaboration, the readiness of the faculty and administration for change, and the availability of any additional resources that will be needed to implement the structure. What may be desirable for one setting may not work well in another. And what may be desirable on its merits may, regrettably, be impractical, given the district's or school's financial resources.

A beginning step is to assess where the district or school is on the continuum between bureaucratic/isolated and collaborative. Keep in mind that teachers and administrators who have had little experience with collegiality may need to be convinced of its benefits before new structures can be initiated. In such a case, it is best to start on a small scale, involving those personnel who show interest. Their involvement in planning collaborative structures is itself a step toward collegiality and a participative management style.

All parties should realize that introducing norms of collaboration is a process that takes place over time. Formal programs such as RSI and OD are designed to run for anywhere from one to three years. It may very well take that much time before such programs show visible results in the form of increased teacher collegiality, involvement in school governance, and faculty-management harmony. It may take even longer before those changes have any discernable effect on teachers' instructional effectiveness and student achievement. Hence, patience is a requisite in the effort to foster collaboration.

Introducing collaborative norms also takes time in another sense, as Bird and Little (1986) attest: "time for teachers to study, analyze and advance their practices; time for principals, department heads, and teacher leaders to support improvement; time for faculties to examine, debate, and improve their norms of civility, instruction, and improvement." Such time must come from somewhere. It is both unfair and unrealistic to expect teachers to somehow find the time for collaborative activities *and* continue to do everything they are expected to do already.

The need for extra time need not imply the need for additional funding, however. To be sure, ambitious projects such as a teaching clinic require that additional teachers be hired to replace those who will serve as trainers in the clinic. Even these costs, however, can be paid for in part out of funds regularly provided for staff development.

In a discussion of the time required for a collegial observation program, Susan Stavert Roper and David E. Hoffman (1986) argue that the real problem is one of priorities:

> Convincing the powers that be that teachers are professionals who learn best from one another is the central issue. In the financial crunch facing so many school districts it would seem easier to "sell" a program that does not require high priced consultants, expensive materials, and disruption of classes than the more typical inservice experience that often requires all three. Strange as it seems, districts will often pay the price for the legitimacy of the expensive "expert" rather than put those resources into using their own staff as experts. Lack of time is a symptom, not a cause, for the more basic problem of lack of support for collegiality.

A consideration sometimes overlooked in planning collaborative structures is the need for training in such skills as problem solving, communication, and observation of classroom teaching. Although in some instances consultants may need to be hired, again a concerted effort should be made to identify capable trainers among the district's or school's staff.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this chapter, we argued that the principal is the single most important agent in introducing norms of collaboration in the school. We then discussed ways in which the principal can introduce such norms--through solving teachers' problems, running interference for faculty members and providing them with the support to engage in collaborative activities, modifying the school's structures in ways that foster interactions among the staff, and observing teachers in action and providing useful feedback based on those observations.

To provide some insight into what is involved in comprehensive plans for stimulating collaboration among personnel in schools, we described three models for such plans: Reaching Success through Involvement (RSI), organizational development, and the effective teaching program of the Pittsburgh Public Schools, with the teaching clinic at Schenley High School as its cornerstone. Next we drew from Lieberman and Miller to provide two examples showing how much more modest efforts, targeted at specific problems within a school or a school district, can lead to increased collaboration as a byproduct.

In several respects, introducing collaboration into a school or a school district resembles any other efforts at school reform. The essential ingredients in such efforts are an accurate assessment of the school's or district's needs and resources and the ability to enlist the support of all appropriate personnel. Programs launched before the needs and resources of the school or district are assessed or that fail to win the support of the personnel involved will almost certainly end in failure.

These similarities are true, however, only of the implementation of schoolwide or districtwide programs that induce teachers and administrators to collaborate on such tasks as school improvement, curriculum development, or peer review. Although formal efforts to encourage collaboration may be appropriate in some schools and districts, other educators may prefer a less structured approach. A single teacher, for instance, can take the first step simply by consulting with a colleague about a problem in his or her classroom. A principal who wants to encourage the faculty to interact about instructional matters can set an example by routinely selecting the advice of individual teachers or of the faculty as a whole. These efforts incur no costs--except psychological ones for those who risk challenging norms of isolation--and they are the most direct route to the goal of a collaborative work environment. Even the structured approaches can be considered successful only to the extent they encourage educators to engage in frequent, informal discussion about the practice of their craft.

Beyond these standard procedures for implementing any reform lies another obstacle that is an even bigger threat to collaboration in schools: complacency. Teachers and administrators must first be convinced that the isolation of teachers in their classrooms and the top-down management philosophy that ignores teachers' expertise are short-changing both those who work in schools and those who are taught there. In the absence of such conviction, it will be easy to dismiss collaboration as too time consuming, costly, or disruptive of the status quo. Perhaps the most important prerequisites for implementation of this particular reform, therefore, are that the school's principal and a majority of its faculty share a vision for an alternative work environment and are willing to devote their energies, expertise, and resources to see that vision fulfilled in their midst.

Conclusion

In the preceding pages we reviewed available research studies and other literature on the social, organizational, and political environment in which teachers perform their task of educating students. This review led us to the subject of collaboration in the schools--a particular way of organizing the relationships among administrators and faculty so as to promote more effective teaching and learning. By summarizing the findings that emerge from these studies, we can highlight some of the interrelationships among these strands of research, point out areas needing further study, and identify the elements of the collaborative school.

The Chapters in Retrospect

In chapter 1, we focused on the actual conditions under which teachers teach. Perhaps the most important finding to emerge--confirmed by numerous studies--is that teachers perform their task largely in isolation from colleagues and principals. Even outside the classroom the teacher typically engages in few meaningful professional contacts with other teachers or with administrators. According to the available research, the norms of behavior in most schools discourage teachers from seeking or giving advice, planning classes together, and going to principals for assistance. Those same norms discourage principals from initiating meaningful dialogues with teachers about teaching practices.

The importance of these findings becomes clear when we consider the plight of the beginning teacher. In teaching, as in any profession, no amount of academic study can prepare the practitioner for all the problems he or she will encounter when embarking on a career. When the beginning teacher encounters a problem in the classroom that was not discussed in education courses, he or she must solve that problem alone--there is no one to go to for help.

Norms of isolation have an adverse effect on the experienced teacher as well. Lacking support and the infusion of fresh ideas from colleagues, it is easy for experienced teachers to fall into set routines and stop learning about the practice of teaching.

In chapter 2, we saw that, although individual teachers may be isolated in their classrooms, many outside forces---organizational, social, and political--combine to influence how and what they teach. These forces include the formal and informal structures of the school, policies and directives formulated at the school district office, preferences of the community, mandates of the state and local governments, and labor contracts negotiated with teacher unions.

We found that the formal organizational structure of the typical school district and the schools within it is modeled after the bureaucratic organizational structure of the nineteenth-century factory. Ideally, in school districts following such a model, important decisions are made by a superintendent appointed by the school board and transmitted through school principals to teachers, who then act on the basis of those decisions. Underlying this bureaucratic model is a philosophy which assumes that those at the top of the organization ladder are in the best position to identify the organization's goals and the means by which those goals can be met.

Many observers have expressed reservations about the bureaucratic model--both as a picture of how schools and school districts *are* run and as a picture of how they *should* be run. According to an alternative model proposed by Jerry L. Patterson and associates, goals are adopted through a process of compromise among competing interest groups, power is diffused throughout the organization, and decision-making is decentralized.

Thomas I. Sergiovanni (1987) takes into account the relationships among the members of the school organization in his proposed "cooperative bureaucracy." This model recognizes that successful schools set clear expectations and goals for teachers yet grant teachers considerable latitude in choosing the best means to achieve those goals. In addition, the cooperative bureaucracy seeks to correct the tendency of school professionals to function autonomously; this model encourages teachers to work together as a team to diagnose and solve problems.

In recent years, relationships between individual school districts and state governments have tended to follow the bureaucratic model, as more states have prescribed school curriculum and teaching methods. Although the federal government has not yet gone that far, judicial decrees mandating an end to segregation and federal laws protecting the educational rights of handicapped children have had an undeniable impact on the classroom.

As the organizational structure of the modern school district came to follow the model of the nineteenth-century factory, so also relationships between teachers and the local school board came to follow the model of relationships between factory management and industrial unions. Although labor contracts hammered out in collective bargaining between the school board and the teacher union provide teachers with a certain amount of security, they can also limit a school board's flexibility when dealing with such issues as school closures and implementation of innovations.

Mary Haywood Metz's case study of the Heartland School

District's magnet schools program illustrates how all these social, structural, and political forces can combine to affect what happens at the classroom level. As this discussion revealed, actions taken in response to pressure exerted by these forces often have unexpected consequences for teaching and learning.

From this overview of external forces that affect and sometimes interfere with the task of teaching, we turned to an investigation of norms and practices that encourage teachers to collaborate with one another and with school administrators.

Teacher collegiality and teacher participation in school decisions are two primary characteristics of the collaborative school, discussed in chapter 3. We defined the collaborative school as one whose norms encourage such help-related activities among teachers as engaging in talk about teaching practices, observing one another teach, planning and preparing teaching materials together, and teaching one another the practices of teaching. In addition, teachers collaborate with administrators on school improvement projects and decision-making. Although research to date on these aspects of the collaborative school is limited, the data available do suggest that collaboration in the schools can lead to more effective teaching and learning.

If collaboration in the schools does, in fact, lead to improved performance on the part of teachers and students, then it is essential for administrators to develop ways of implementing collaboration in the schools. The principal is widely conceded to be the key individual in setting the norms of a school and, hence, would be the key figure in developing norms of collaboration. Chapter 4 offers some specific suggestions to guide principals' efforts in promoting collaboration--such as forming teacher committees to work on specific school problems and providing teachers with time to observe one another. A range of approaches--from comprehensive strategies to more modest efforts limited in scope--may be used to introduce collaborative structures in schools. Collaboration should not be sought as an end in itself; it is one possible approach among many toward promoting improved teaching and learning.

Areas for Additional Research

Our review of the available literature on the work environment of teaching, its effect on student learning, and ways in which that environment can be improved suggests three major areas in which further research is needed. One is the role of the school board and school district central office in shaping that context. A second is the effectiveness of the collaborative school in improving student learning. And a third is the agent and methods needed to effect positive changes in the organizational climate of teaching.

Role of the School District

Although the principal is the primary agent for developing collaboration in the school, the school board and district central office play essential supporting roles. The board and central office set policies that allow schools greater or lesser degrees of latitude in determining what and how they are to teach their students. The district office hires principals who either favor collaboration or who are uncomfortable with the concept. Further, one essential resource in the collaborative school is time--time for the principal to work with teachers and time for teachers to work with one another. If the central office does not cooperate with the school in making time available for such activities, efforts at collaboration will necessarily be impeded.

Several questions focus on the role of the school district in shaping the organizational context of teaching. Which school districts have actively attempted to promote collaborative climates within their schools and how have they gone about doing so? Assuming that a school district wants to develop collaborative climates within its schools, how will it find the time and other resources necessary to do so? What constraints are imposed by collective bargaining contracts? These are all areas that need to be studied further.

Impact on Student Learning

Over the last three decades, school districts have invested large sums of money and considerable effort in implementing reforms, many of which have had little or no effect on student learning. School leaders are understandably reluctant to invest more time and energy in implementing additional reforms unless they have good reason to believe that those reforms will actually work. Although many good reasons for implementing collaboration in schools exist, one rationale that still lacks research validation is the collaborative school's effect on student learning. To date, educators have little more to go on than the results of a few case studies.

Needed are quantitative studies involving large numbers of schools over a wide demographic range and designed to analyze the differences in performance between students in collaborative and noncollaborative schools. In addition, longitudinal studies need to be done to assess differences in student performance before and after schools move from a noncollaborative to a collaborative climate.

Implementation at the School Site

If it is established that a collaborative school climate has a positive impact on student performance, the problem will still remain of finding ways to develop such a climate within the school. The principal may, in fact, be the *primary* agent of change, but can he or she function as the *sole* agent for developing a collaborative climate? If not, what is the "critical mass" of support from other members of the school population that must exist for collaborative norms to be established?

If particular schools can be identified that have successfully moved from noncollaborative to collaborative climates, how have they gone about this change? What skills and qualities are required to lead a collaborative school? And what effect do external factors, particularly the constraints imposed by state educational reform legislation, have on work relationships among adults in the school? Further research on all these questions is needed to guide school personnel in moving from noncollaborative to collaborative school climates.

In sum, much remains to be learned about the social, organizational, and political context of teaching and its effect on student learning. At the same time, a number of inferences can be drawn from the data already available. Thus, the available research clearly demonstrates that, in the typical American public school, teachers work in isolation, engaging in few professional contacts with their colleagues and receiving little professional assistance from their principals. The literature also suggests that bureaucratic formal structures of school systems, coupled with the rationalistic foundation on which such structures are based, reinforce such isolation. And a growing body of research suggests a strong correlation between the school's organizational context and certain teacher behaviors. Several studies have established, for example, that teachers enjoy their work more, work harder, improve their practice of teaching, and perceive of themselves as being more effective when they work within a collaborative setting.

Only when we attempt to establish a correspondence between a collaborative work environment and student performance do we find ourselves on shaky ground. Insufficient research has been done at this point to prove or disprove the theory that collaboration within the schools will lead to improved student performance. Still, the concept of the collaborative school appears to be a promising one. If the collaborative school setting is conducive to better teaching, it would also seem to be conducive to better student performance.

Elements of the Collaborative School

From these findings emerge a set of beliefs and practices that characterize the collaborative school:

- the belief, founded on effective schools research, that the quality of education is largely determined by what happens at the school site
- the conviction, also supported by research findings, that instruction is most effective in a school environment characterized by norms of collegiality and continuous improvement
- the belief that teachers are professionals who are to be given responsibility for the instructional process and held accountable for its outcomes
- the use of a wide range of practices and structures that enable administrators and teachers to work together on school improvement
- the involvement of teachers in decisions about school goals and the means for implementing them

Implicit in these elements is the collaborative school's overriding goal: educational improvement. A host of other benefits may be expected to derive from the collaborative model, the most notable of which are staff harmony, mutual respect between teachers and administrators, and a professional work environment for teachers. But the primary rationale for this model is the instructional effectiveness that results when teachers participate collegially in school improvement and their own professional development.

Collaboration, then, is not sought for its own sake, but rather is a means to improve the quality of schooling. Whatever strategies of collaboration are employed must be judged for their effectiveness in attaining that goal.

Nor does collaboration require that school administrators abdicate their authority. We affirm Scott D. Thomson and Don Cameron's definition of the *collaborative school* as "a school in which the professional autonomy of teachers and the managerial authority of principals are harmonized" (from their preface to *Ventures in Good Schooling: A Cooperative Model for a Successful Secondary School*, copublished by the NEA and the NASSP).

A Fateful Choice

By its very nature, the collaborative school is a school site innovation, implemented by the personnel at each school. Will educators view the collaborative school as an option--to be desired or not, depending on the preferences of each school's faculty and principal--or as a requirement for quality schooling,

to be energetically pursued even at high cost? The answer, of course, depends on how convinced educators themselves are about the benefits of collaboration and whether, convinced or not, they are prepared to change ingrained patterns of behavior. A prerequisite for collaboration is that all parties desire to relate to one another in constructive new ways. Administrators must convey to teachers that their participation in school governance is desired. In turn, teachers who have adopted a combative stance toward management must shed their hostility. Respect and cooperation must flow both directions.

In addition, teachers must be willing to work together as a team and principals must be both willing and able to define the team's common purpose and give structure to its work. Along with the loneliness and occasional desperation that accompany isolation from colleagues are certain emotional rewards. How ready are teachers to forfeit their freedom from inspection and criticism? And are principals up to the task of leading a collaborative enterprise? Robert J. Alphonso and Lee Goldsberry point out that coordinating professionals in the fluid context of collegial support is a complex task that "cannot be done through generating formal rules, or even standardized procedures." Consequently, a collaborative school requires a higher calibre of leadership than does a bureaucratic school.

An inherent characteristic of collaborative norms and practices is that they cannot be imposed on a school's personnel by outside authorities. Cooperation and teamwork depend on voluntary effort and frequently require that personal preferences be subordinated to group goals. Whether teachers and administrators in a majority of the nation's schools eventually will decide the benefits of collaboration are worth the risk remains to be seen. On their choice depends the success of the current movement to create a truly professional work environment for teaching.

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